THE RAMBLES OF THE EMPEROR CHING TĬH IN KËANG NAN.

A CHINESE TALE.

TRANSLATED BY

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WITH A PREFACE

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THE

RAMBLES

OF THE

EMPEROR

CHING TĬH.

繡像正德皇遊江南

TRANSLATED

TKIN SHEN.



THE RAMBLES

OF THE

EMPEROR CHING TĬH,

ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

" The young and rambling prince his palace leaves,
Thoughtless how much his ministers he grieves,
The faithful guardian shuddering at the stake,
Changes his dress, and follows in his wake.
His way dark doubts and dismal fears annoy,
But meeting time brings with it smiles and joy."

THE same day that the Emperor told Chin Pang that he might remain at home he ordered Chow Yung to get ready for the journey. Chin Pang prepared a parting feast, and on the morrow, every thing being ready, Yung took his two rods of steel behind him, and attended his majesty. Pang accompanied them a little way, and

then returned, leaving the monarch and his servant to pursue their route alone.

Travelling by day and resting at night, they pleasantly beguiled the way by searching after willows and flowers, and very shortly they arrived at Këàng Nang foo in the wished-for province. After they had found an inn where they might lodge, Ching Tĭh inquired of the landlord whether there were any famous hills or enchanting spots, where ramblers might be at home, in the neighbourhood. The man replied that the place was full of hills and forests, monasteries, sacred spots and monuments, and said that if they wished to ramble and see such things, he would call a boy next day to act as their guide.

The Emperor assented to the proposal, and accordingly, on the morrow, he and Yung were conducted by a little urchin to the various streams and hills. The mountains were clear and the waters crystal. The forests of firs were full of birds, and the whole scene was surpassingly beautiful. "Now I perceive," said Ching Tĭh to his

companion, "that the description you gave me was perfectly correct. After taking their fill of rambling, they betook themselves to the road in order to return, when they observed an old woman and a young lady in great sorrow and distress, coming in the direction where they were.

The Emperor told Yung to inquire what was the matter, and the general advancing for the purpose, the two strangers had an opportunity of observing him and his companion; seeing that their appearance was not common, the old woman restrained her tears, and replied to Yung's inquiries.

"I belong," said she, "to the Lam family of Gan Hing hëën in this province, and this is my daughter Chin Go. My husband Tsëën Ts'ing, commonly called Yin Kwang, after gaining the rank of Tsin Sze, obtained an imperial order, appointing him prefect of Wan Shwing hëën in Shan Se. He entered accordingly upon his duties, but without examining carefully into the state of the treasury as left by his predecessor. For half a year the peo-

ple were happy under his pure administration, but at the end of that time there arrived a new commissioner of inspection, named Wei Wan Kwang. This officer became acquainted with my husband's error about the treasury, and consequently demanded for himself a present of one thousand taels. It was impossible for Yin Kwang, the purity of whose administration did not allow him to amass money for himself, to satisfy this request, and the commissioner in a passion of resentment sent a memorial to the Emperor, accusing him of having taken three thousand taels from the imperial stores. His majesty, being unacquainted with the facts of the case, issued an order for my husband's imprisonment, and yesterday a party was sent to take possession of his property. As they could find no money, they carried away all our clothes, chests, and other furniture, leaving me and my daughter to our distress. We are now going to the village before us, to my brother-in-law Lan Yuh Shing, to implore his assistance in delivering my husband

out of prison, and otherwise consult with him as to what we ought to do."

When his majesty had heard this account he exclaimed, "I did not think when I parted from my brother Tsëen a year ago that he would have been reduced to such trouble as this!" He then addressed himself to the old lady, saying, "I and your husband are connected by bonds of the closest friendship, and your recital fills me with the greatest indignation." With these words he produced a piece of gold, and presented it to her, telling her and her daughter not to be distressed, and that they need not go to her brother-in-law, but should return home with the gold, and be of good cheer, "for," said he, "I will surely deliver my brother from prison within ten or twenty days, and procure his promotion to a higher office."

When the two women heard this their sorrow was suddenly converted into joy. The daughter at the same time advanced and said, "Since you have thus formed a fraternal alliance with my father, tell me I pray you your name, surname, and resi-

dence, that when my father has returned home through your influence he may go and signify to you his thanks. I beg also that you will take back this gold, for our sole desire is that you will speedily deliver my venerable sire from prison. That will be amply sufficient to awaken our deep gratitude for your great kindness."

"Be not so anxious, my niece," replied his majesty; "be assured that if not in fifteen days, your father will be restored to you in a month at farthest. When he returns home upon his promotion, you need only tell him that I am a gentleman of the capital, surnamed Choo; this will be sufficient." With this he gave the money to the old lady, and instantly moved away in an easy manner with Chow Yung. The two women were desirous to put some more questions to him, but he and his companion were already gone some distance. They were therefore obliged to return home with the gold, which they did full of gratitude, and treasuring in their memories the four words, "Choo, of the capital."

The Emperor and Chow Yung returned

to their inn, having rewarded their attendant with a few cash. During the night they talked about the oppressions which many of the governors of provinces exercised towards their inferiors. "The memorial presented to me," said his majesty, "stated that Tsëën Ts'ing was buying the people's hearts, and for that purpose wasted the money of the treasury; and it was impossible for me, residing in the capital, to know how the circumstances were perverted." The same night he made a memorandum of the facts of the case, and the next day he and the general went to another place in search of amusement.

But we must leave the Emperor to his rambles for a time, and return to the court. After several days, Leang Choo, Le Tung Yang, and the other great officers, in consequence of his majesty's absence from court, proceeded to the palace in a body, to inquire after his health. Having sent in word of their arrival, a eunuch came out, and told them that the Emperor was sick, and unable to attend the court, and that in the mean time he could not see them

all, but only called the guardian to enter and speak with him. The others accordingly returned home, while Leang Choo followed the eunuch into the palace. When they reached the "ease nourishing" apartment, and the Emperor was not visible, the minister inquired where he was. The eunuch, upon this, presented to him the paper which Ching Tĭh had left. The perusal of it threw the guardian into great terror, and he inquired who had suggested the enterprise. The other answered him, by narrating truly all that had occurred, Yúng's obstinate refusal to listen to the Emperor's proposal, and the Emperor's subsequent flight from the palace.

"But," said Leang Choo, "since his majesty left this declaration for me, how is it that you only give it to me to-day? What death do you think you deserve?"

"I trust you will observe," replied the other, "that his majesty ordered me not to give it you till five days after his departure."

"After he had gone," inquired the guardian again, "were the Empress-

dowager and the Empress acquainted with his departure, or not?"

"They were," replied the other, "and just now desired me to call you into the palace to consult with them."

The guardian accordingly went, followed by the eunuch. When the minister had paid his homage to the Empress-dowager, she requested him to be seated, and then inquired whether he knew on what account the Emperor had left the palace, and if he were protected by any officer of ability.

"It is an old and true saying," said the guardian, "that no one knows a son so well as his father. When the late Emperor was on his death-bed, and issuing his last orders, he said that his successor was fond of ease and rambling, and was self-conceited. This has been verified; for after his death, Ching Tĭh's mind was dissipated and seduced by Lew Kin and his villanous associates. Thus it was, that after they had fled from the court, his majesty felt a constant want of their society, to sing and dance and make merry with him, and

could find no pleasure in the palace. When Chow Yung therefore, in asking leave to go home, dropped a few words unguardedly about going to Kĕang Nan to sweep the tombs of his forefathers, his majesty's constitutional temperament was excited. He instantly pretended that he had been warned in a dream to go to Kĕang Nan, and find a pillar for the empire, and ordered Chow Yung to protect him thither. That officer perceived his error, and earnestly remonstrated with his majesty, swearing even that he would not obey such an order. On this the Emperor altered his plan, and, waiting till Yung had gone, assumed the dress of a scholar. I suppose he overtook the general on the road, and obliged him to take him under his escort. By this paper which he left, I find that he commissions me to administer the government. But the government of this mighty empire is no task for an inferior person like me; and since the civil and military officers are continually coming from all quarters to receive orders, the court cannot be a single day without the

sovereign. Moreover it is characteristic of his majesty to forget his sorrows when he meets with pleasure. If he find plenty of enjoyment in his ramblings, he will entirely forget the court and his throne; and while he is thus wandering about, should any of the Eunuch's partizans get knowledge of his situation, we shall have a sudden and dangerous emergency. In my humble opinion, you had better express your will to him in a letter, and I will proceed to Kėang Nan to search for him, and escort him back to the court."

Her majesty was delighted with this proposal. She instantly wrote the required letter, and gave it to the guardian. At the same time she delivered the sword, conferring jurisdiction over all the nobles, which had belonged to the late Emperor, and told him wherever he found any crafty rebel, or any favourite mistresses of the monarch, deluding his mind and detaining his person, instantly on his own single determination to inflict punishment. "Behead first," said she, "and afterwards re-

port. Fear no opposition. If my royal son continues unawakened, and opposes you, by objecting his sovereign authority, you can show him my letter, which will remove all his opposition."

> "How vast the interests of an empire are!
> How can they be one day without a prince!"

CHAP. XXIII.

"Too oft, alas! princes of rambling fond,
Leave vacant thrones, and wander like Ching Tih.
Yet here some good was done. The heedless squire
Pursues his guilty plans on danger's brink.
Himself and all his family are caught
Fast in the royal net."

The Empress-dowager repeated the charges to the guardian, with which the last chapter concludes, again and again. Leang Choo received every injunction by bowing his head to the earth, and then addressed her majesty, saying, "After I have gone you had better give orders that all the palace-gates be kept firmly shut. The tablet denying audience had also better be hung up, announcing that his majesty, in consequence of sickness, cannot see a single officer, and all business of importance must be referred to Yang Yih Ts'ing and Le Tung Yang. No inmate of the palace must be allowed to go out or come in

without special commission from your majesty; and if you yourself have any weighty matter you can send a trusty eunuch to call these two officers to the palace, so that no reports may get spread abroad."

After suggesting these cautions Leang Choo took leave, and proceeded from the palace to the residences of Yĭh Ts'ing and Tung Yang, and acquainted them with the departure of the Emperor and his own intentions. He then intrusted them with the administration of the government, and after enjoining them to take proper precautions against Lew Kin and his crafty associates, he returned to his own house. On his arrival he told all the domestics, as well as his wife and children, that the Emperor was unwell, and had commissioned him to go in search of a skilful physician. "After my departure," said the guardian, "you must not go out of the house to create mischief. If I find after examination on my return that you have disobeyed this order I will show you no mercy."

All murmured assent to his injunctions, and Leang Choo instantly changed his

dress, and provided himself with gold and silver for the expenses of travelling. This done, he ordered an honest and experienced servant, named Hoo Fuh, to follow him, and then left the capital and commenced his journey directly for Këang Nan.

> "From pass to pass, from hill to hill he went,
> Nor shrank from labour, for the kingdom spent."

As they proceeded on their way the master and his servant made careful inquiry at all the inns, farms, winehouses, and tea-shops. In a short time, over hill and river, they arrived at the borders of the desired province, and after satisfying themselves that the Emperor had never appeared in any of the lodging-houses in that quarter, they merely stopped a night there, and proceeded elsewhere in their quest.

Having thus brought the guardian into the field, we must leave him for a time, in order to trace the ramblings of Ching Tĭh and his companion. One day they reached the borders of Yang Chow, after travelling

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Having thus brought the guardian into the field, we must leave him for a time, in order to trace the ramblings of Ching Tĭh and his companion. One day they reached the borders of Yang Chow, after travelling

over lofty hills for half the day, and without meeting with a single inn. The day was now far spent, and the Emperor, on turning to Chow Yung, said, "I marvel that there should be no people on such a large road as this. It is destitute moreover of all houses of entertainment; and what shall we do in my wearied condition?"

"Let us proceed forward," said Yung, "and perhaps something may turn up."

They accordingly resumed their journey, and after turning the corner of a hill there appeared at some distance before them a considerable village, concealed amid a grove of trees. Enlivened by the sight, the Emperor quickened his steps, and entered the place in quest of a lodging. The answer, however, which he got to several inquiries was, that there was no such house there, and he was obliged, notwithstanding his weariness, to travel on. By and by he came to a clear stream, with rows of fir-trees on both banks, and after crossing it by a stone bridge he found a cool and elegant shed, embosomed between two cultivated groves of bamboos. Inside it was

furnished with seats and benches of stone, and Ching Tĭh, allured by its attractions, went in to refresh himself, sending his companion onward to pursue his inquiries.

While the Emperor was sitting here, and looking all around, he observed in front of him a very elegant house, and an old man sitting at the door. As he was about to approach, and put some questions to him, Yung returned in a hurry, and told him no lodging-house was to be found. Grieved by the information, he immediately advanced to the door with the general, and asked the old man whether he could direct them to an inn.

"Formerly," answered the porter, "there was such a house here ; but at present there is not."

Ching Tĭh, as a last resource, then asked him whether he could afford them a lodging; but the old man put on a mournful countenance at the question, and replied, "Your coming, gentlemen, is very unfortunate. It is an ordinary circumstance for travellers to be accommodated with lodging here, but to-day some circumstances have

thrown my master and his whole family into the greatest grief, so that I fear he will not accede to your request."

"Who is your master," asked the Emperor, "and what has occurred to occasion him such grief?"

"The circumstances are indeed calculated to awaken indignation, but are not of a character to be remedied by strangers. I would advise you therefore to go somewhere else."

"Do you just go in, and say that two travellers from the capital are requesting a lodging, and that if he will receive us for this night, however great his difficulties may be we will remove them."

On this speech the porter looked carefully at the strangers, and perceiving from their appearance that they were not ordinary men, but of superior character, he did as the Emperor requested, telling them to sit down a little, till he came out again to receive them. The owner of the house, with his wife and daughter, were weeping, when the old man entered, but when they had heard his report, and the assurance

with which the Emperor's message concluded, they knew not whether to believe or to disbelieve it. The gentleman, however, told the others to retire, while he himself went out with the porter to receive the travellers.

As soon as the Emperor was aware of his approach he drew near and paid him his respects, on which the other invited them into the hall, and requested them to be seated as his guests. He then told a servant to bring tea, and after they had taken a cup or two, inquired who they were, and why they had come to that part of the country.

"My name," replied the Emperor, "is Hwang Lun, and I belong to the capital. As I was going along with my nephew Hwang Yin here to visit some friends in a village farther on, we had to pass by this way. Being overtaken by night, and not able to find any lodging-house, we made so bold as to request the shelter of your precious roof till the morning, and count ourselves exceedingly fortunate in having obtained it. May I venture to ask your

name and surname, and why you look so sad? You need not fear to speak to us plainly and at large."

On this request their host gave three sighs, and replied, "I am a native of this district, and named Loo Hung Tseaou, now upwards of sixty years of age. My wife Woo brought me an only daughter, whom we named Tsing Go. She is now fifteen, and has been espoused to a Sew Tsae named Lin Sze Hwa, who lives in the village before us. The troubles of my family commenced on the thirteenth day of the present month. For several years it has been customary on that day to celebrate the birth-day of the god Woo Te, by arranging elegant feasts in every street to meet the sacred car.

"In a neighbouring village there resides a rude and wicked fellow, called T'ung Tsung Kéén, a son of T'ung Tsze Yung, superintendent of revenue in Sze Chuen, and brother of T'ung E Shan, colonel of Loo Ning camp in Hoo Nan. He is of a violent, cruel, and oppressive disposition. His companions are idle fellows from every

quarter, and not only is he abandoned to lewd pleasures, but he proceeds to outrage and mischief without fear, so that all the neighbours stand in awe of him.

"On the day which I have mentioned, he came in this direction rambling in quest of pleasure, while my daughter happened to be looking out from a window in the gallery. The dog began to leer at her, and laugh, and praise her beauty, which she no sooner perceived than she shut the window. In her hurry, however, she let her fan drop into the street, and the rascal instantly picked it up. My daughter sent out a girl to request him to return it, which he would not do. This indeed would have been but a small matter, but he moreover said that I had betrothed my daughter to him. His bad passions were aroused, and he instantly went home, and came back with some servants bearing the various ceremonial presents, and urging me at the same time to allow the marriage. I told him that my daughter was already betrothed, and that I would give him ten taels of silver to get the fan back again.

On this he asserted, that when my daughter assented to his proposals, she had given him this fan as a token. When I heard this, my breast swelled with rage, and I had a long altercation with him. At last, he said, that if I was willing it was well; but if not, it was no matter, for he would come this night, and carry my daughter to his house by force. He then put down the presents, and went off, determined to send the flowery chair, and accomplish his purpose of violence. In such a case as this, how am I to act so as to avert the evil?"

When he had ended, he burst into a flood of tears, and the sounds of sorrow came also from behind the hall to the Emperor's ear. "Since such illegal deeds," said he, "are perpetrated in your village, why not go to court, and lodge an accusation against the villain?"

"The officers of this district," replied the other, "both civil and military, are intimately connected with his father and brother, and have very frequent intercourse with himself. If one does not ac-

cuse him, the evil rests where it is; but if I were to accuse him, I should be ruining my family, spending my property, and perhaps even perilling my life. On this account the whole neighbourhood stands in fear, and suffers his violence, without any one daring to withstand or provoke him. If he come here to-night, though I cry to burst my throat, no one will dare to come to my assistance, through fear lest he should bring misfortune on himself.

"I have heard, indeed, that the new prefect of the foo Lo Chaou Fei, is a stern and upright man, with an iron countenance, and without partiality, supporting the weak, and opposing the strong. He has several times issued orders for this scoundrel's apprehension, but his friends have interposed, and screened him. And moreover though I wished to go to the prefect, and lodge an accusation, the way is long; it would take me a day to go and come, so that my family would be left in great terror during my absence. I can thus do nothing, but fold my hands and

be silent, remaining with all my house in a state of fright. If you can devise some skilful expedient, I beseech your assistance. You shall nôt find me insensible to your great kindness."

The old gentleman's speech brought indignation into Chow Yung's eyes. With dilated pupils, he struck the table, and exclaimed, in a great rage, "How is it that in a time of such great repose dogs like this dare to act in such a violent manner? Let him come to-night, and I will beat him to death, and rid you of your trouble."

"What you say is good," observed Hung Tseaou; "but if you beat him in this way, after you are gone I and my whole family will die beneath his hands."

"We will shield you from all danger," said Ching Tĭh. "The new prefect is an intimate friend of mine, and I will instantly send him a letter to come here with a party of soldiers to take and imprison the villain and his associates, in order to remove entirely the disturbers of the district. I will tell him also to take a list of all your household, and to write a proclamation, to

be suspended before your door, so that no person will dare to intrude upon you."

When he heard this, the sorrow of Tseaou's countenance relaxed. "If you only assist me in this way," said he, "your kindness will indeed be as deep as the wide sea, and you two will prove second parents to me."

With this he told a servant to go in and call out his wife and daughter to express their thanks to his guests. Tsae Go, being behind the hall, had overheard their conversation, and instantly came out with her mother. Having saluted the strangers, and bowed their heads to the earth, the young lady said, "If indeed your excellencies will deliver us, you will be entitled to rank as our benefactors, and confer on me the greatest happiness."

Ching Tĭh looked at her, and was struck by her surpassing beauty. "Such an affair as this," said he, "is too trifling to be anxious about." With these words he ordered a servant to bring him the four precious articles of the study, and wrote a letter. Having sealed it with the imperial

seal, carefully folded it up, and directed it, he then gave it to Hung Tseaou, charging him to send a messenger the same evening with it to Lo Chaou Fei.

A man was accordingly despatched with the utmost haste; and by this time Hung Tseaou's mind felt a little composed, so that he ordered his servants to bring forth the wine, and prepare a feast for the entertainment of his guests.

> " Sudden and causeless woe assailed the house,
> And well it was the dragon came that way."

CHAP. XXIV.

"Crafty and bold the villains had
Oppress'd the neighbourhood;
Fearful and weak the people all
In helpless terror stood.
Sudden the Emperor arrived
In Keäng Nan's fertile plains;
The wretch was seized; and all his deeds
Met law's avenging pains."

The bearer of the Emperor's letter proceeded to Yang Chow, and on his arrival at the prefect's requested one of the attendants who were about to inform his excellency that a messenger with a letter from the capital wished to see him. Lo Chaou Hwing, on receiving this message, ordered the man to be introduced, supposing that the letter was from some of his friends. The messenger entered the hall, and presented the letter to the prefect upon his knees; but that officer had no sooner seen the superscription, Choo, who

by Heaven's appointment continues the circle of succession, than he was filled with awe, and ordered the incense table to be prepared, before which he knelt and read. The letter was to the following effect.

"The Emperor, by Heaven's appointment continuing the circle of succession, intimates his will:

"Being warned by the gods in a dream that in Këang Nan there was a man who would prove a pillar to the empire, I have changed my dress, and come hither in search of him. Since my departure from the capital, I have travelled over several foo in prosecution of this object, examining, at the same time, into the condition of the people.

"Yesterday I arrived at the village of Tsing Sung, in your foo, and lodged in the house of Loo Hung Tseaou, from whom I learned a most wicked transaction, which originated on the thirteenth of this fifth month, on occasion of the god Woo Te's procession. It is customary at that time for men and women to assemble in crowds,

to witness the spectacle, and among others that repaired to the above mentioned village was a rude and wicked fellow called T'ung Tsung Këën. He is a son of T'ung Tsze Yung, superintendent of the revenue in Sze Chuen, and brother to T'ung E Shan, colonel of Loo Ning camp in Hoo Nan. Owing to the power of these relatives, his intercourse with the various local officers is very close, and his lawless conduct is controlled by no considerations of prudence.

"On the day mentioned, he came to Tsing Sung in pursuit of pleasure, and happening to see the daughter of my host, he was struck with her beauty, and wished to get her for his bride. The young lady however had already been betrothed to the Sew Tsae, Lin Sze Hwa, and when her father consequently refused Tsung Këën's request, the fellow threw down the ceremonial presents, and went home, threatening to prepare the flowery chair, and send men to carry her off by force, on the night of the fifteenth.

"My companion and I were made acquainted with these things on our arrival by Hung Tseaou. On hearing his narrative I told him to go and accuse his injurer before the magistrate of the héén, but he told me, that, with the exception of yourself, all the officers of the district were on most intimate terms with the villain, and that they had even screened him several times, when you had sent orders for his apprehension.

"Of what use is it to retain such venal and impure magistrates in office? You must forthwith degrade and imprison them, and supply their places in the mean time with those who are waiting for employment. You must also raise two thousand soldiers, and send them hither in different directions to seize all the rioters. This done, you will put them into prison with the others, and await orders from myself on my return to the capital. As to Loo Hung Tseaou, you must make a record of his case, and suspend a proclamation, to secure him at once from present violence and from future trouble.

"Act according to this decree with all despatch.

"Respect this; respect and honour."

After the prefect had read the imperial letter, he performed the ceremonies of audience, and then inquired of the messenger whether the guests were still at his master's house or not. The man replied that they were there when he left it, but might perhaps have departed since. On this Chaou Hwing transmitted an imperial order to the major general of Yang Chow, to proceed to the village of Lŏ Mei with a thousand soldiers, and apprehend Tsung Kèèn's associates. The major general having come to the prefect's office in consequence, the latter showed him his majesty's decree, saying, "If you value your life, practise no private favour." The two lieutenants of the right and left camps were next despatched to Loo Hung Tseaou's, to seize the people who were to carry off his daughter, and thither they were followed by the prefect himself at the head of all the people of his office, in order to meet his majesty. It was well these steps were taken, for the

same day, as soon as it was evening, Tsung Këën called all his servants, and told them to proceed with the flowery chair to meet his bride, and even to bring her away by force, should any opposition be made to them. He assured them that they need not fear the consequences of the outrage, for he would bear them through any thing, however great. Emboldened by his words, the men proceeded to Hung Tscaou's like so many dragons or tigers, making the heavens ring with the sound of their music. Their approach was intimated to the old gentleman by some servants whom he had stationed outside after supper to watch. The chair, they told him, had arrived, and several men had ridden forward on horseback. It was necessary therefore for him to make up his mind as to what he would do.

On hearing this, Hung Tscaou and all his family looked one another in the face, and were overcome with fear. Chow Yung seeing their condition, told him not to be afraid, but to go in with his uncle for a time, for he himself knew how to manage the

comers. The Emperor and his host retired accordingly behind, and Chow Yung, leaving the servants to secure the hall door, advanced, and took his position at the gate, with a rod of steel in each hand. In a short time the music approached, sounding to Heaven, and a host of lanterns converting the darkness into bright day, followed by a string of bearers and minor villains. When they arrived in front of the gate, they attempted to enter in a body, but Yung stopped them, crying at the same time in a loud and rough tone, "Your master's is no marriage family; what do you come here for?"

To this the others replied with a laugh, "Your master has agreed with ours about a marriage. This evening has been appointed, moreover, as being good and fortunate, to carry home the young lady. Who are you, that you are ignorant of this? Quickly go in for us, and tell the lady not to lose this felicitous hour by protracting her toilette."

"Dogs," cried Yung, "you have plenty to say, but I advise you to go home again

with speed. If you talk any more, this rod of steel in my hand will take some of your lives."

This speech put them into a great passion. "Who are you," cried a multitude of them at once, "that talk in this way, in ignorance of the danger to which you are exposed from us? Quickly declare your dog's name."

"Do you not know," said Yung, "the T'ae Sing Hwang Jin of this year?"

On this one man observed, "No matter what T'ae Sing he is; if he will not bring the young lady out to us, we must go in and take her."

They then all approached to enter, but Yung put forth his hand, and, grasping the former speaker, threw him to the ground with all his force, so that he instantly expired. He then raised his rods, and attacked the crowd. Heads were broken, foreheads torn open, and the villains scattered in all directions, making the best of their way home to tell their master of the issue of their expedition.

Tsung Këën was dreadfully enraged at

the news. He instantly despatched several cards, and assembled a body of more than five hundred idle profligates, all armed and fierce. Having put himself at the head of these, he led them towards Hung Tseaou's.

It was day-break by the time they reached the village in front, and Chow Yung seeing them, as they advanced from thence with great tumult, shut the gate, and retired into the house. Calling Ching Tĭh aside, the general said to him, "The prefect's troops will be here in a little, and if they see your majesty, will endeavour to detain you. We had better go away before they come up." He then said to their host, "We have managed the matter for you so that you need fear no violence. After the villain Tsung Këen is taken, you must complete the marriage of your daughter with the Sew Tsae as soon as possible. If the prefect enquire about us, you can tell him that we went away this morning."

By this time they heard the sound of drums and horns outside the house, and

going out to look, the Emperor and his companion perceived that the troops had come up, and surrounded Tsung Kéén and his associates, so that not one could escape. They therefore opened the gate, and calling a servant to attend to it, mounted their horses, and rode off at full speed.

> "Then shone the Emperor's paternal heart,
> Saving the people from their injurers."

CHAP. XXV.

> "Fine pearls we keep in caskets sure,
> Their beauties to conceal;
> For should their glories once be shown,
> Men surely would them steal."

When the prefect Chaou Hwing arrived with the troops at Hung Tschou's, he found a number of men, some on foot and some on horseback, making a tumult before the house. There could be no doubt about their being Tsung Kéén and his associates, and orders were given to the soldiers to separate and attack them both in front and behind, so as to make prisoners of them all. The profligate himself, however, was not at all terrified by their approach, but called out with a laugh to Chaou Hwing whether he did not know who he was. The prefect made no reply, but told his men to secure their captives, and advanced forward to the house. He then told the

messenger who had summoned him to go in and inform the Emperor that he had taken the villain, and, if permitted, would be glad to have an audience. "If his majesty says anything," added he, "come quickly, and let me know it."

The man accordingly went in to the hall behind with this message, and inquired of his master where the two guests were. Hung Tseaou told him they had gone a little ago, and asked what he wanted by inquiring about them?

"Who do you think they were?"

"I suppose that they are two men of spirit and reputation from the capital."

"No; one of them is the Emperor. Chaou Hwing has brought a body of troops here, and taken Tsung Këën and all his companions prisoners. I have heard also that another party has been despatched for the apprehension of his family. Before our gate too an imperial decree has been hung up to protect us from all future annoyance, from any of the officers, whether small or great. And now the prefect is waiting to know his majesty's will in

the middle hall, and sent me in with this information."

Nothing could exceed the old gentleman's joy on hearing this news. "The Emperor," said he, "when departing, charged me that if any of the officers should inquire about him, I should say that he was gone. He was afraid probably of being detained by them, and therefore went away privately." With this he dressed himself, and went out to the prefect in the hall. That magistrate instantly inquired whether the Emperor was coming out, and being told that he had gone in the morning, leaving orders that his decree should be put in execution, he took his leave, in spite of the other's efforts to detain him.

Having accompanied his guest out of the door, Hung Tseaou returned to the hall, and acquainted his family with their good fortune, on which every one of them in great joy returned thanks to his majesty on their knees, and in the face of Heaven.

In the mean time the prefect assembled

his troops in front of the house, and led them back along with the prisoners. On reaching the entrance of the village, they were met by the colonel, who had succeeded in capturing the whole of Tsung Kéén's family. The two parties returned to the office together, and as soon as they arrived, the prefect produced the imperial decree, and commenced the trial. The captives all confessed their guilt, of which a record was made, and they were then sent to prison.

The next step in accordance with the same decree was to degrade the various magistrates, and imprison them, till the imperial will should be satisfied regarding them. By this time they knew the whole case, and cursed Tsung Kéén in their hearts. That gentleman was also convinced of his faults; but repentance could not recal the past. Finally, the prefect supplied the vacant offices as he had been commanded, and then sent a memorial of all his proceedings to the capital.

While the Emperor was pursuing his rambles in this style, the guardian never

intermitted his active quest. It was now some time since he had left the capital, and by continuing their journies during the night, when the moon permitted them, he and his servant had travelled over several heên, but without meeting with the slightest trace of the Emperor. One day they arrived at the district of Paou Lin, and, after several fruitless inquiries at the lodging-houses, they were obliged to remain in one of them for the night. Next morning, as they were about to resume their journey, they observed a number of officers, both civil and military, passing before the door, and preceded by a number of gongs and a noisy crowd.

"Where are these officers going?" asked the guardian of his host.

"You are ignorant of the cause," replied the man. "In this neighbourhood there is a very rich family of the surname of Chae, and to-day happens to be the birth-day of the mother of it; and these officers, I suppose, are going to offer their congratulations."

"But who is the head of this family?"

asked Leang Choo again. "Is he a relation of the Emperor, or some great lord at court?"

"Not at all," was the reply. "There are five brothers of them. Leang Jin the eldest paid considerable attention to his studies, and, by the help of some money, gained not long ago the rank of Sew Tsae. The rest of them are solely indebted to their wealth for their dignity, for their father commenced life empty-handed, though he succeeded in earning several hundred acres of fat land, and some million taels of silver; and they have thus been enabled to form a beautiful alliance with these officers."

This account stirred up the guardian's rage, and made him exclaim, "These dogs of officers, to flatter the god of wealth, and forget that they are the parents of the people! Just let me go and expose them."

With these words he requested his host to relate to him particularly how the old man had acquired his fortune; and the other accordingly answered him as follows. "Their father," said he, "was named

Yung Fuh, and commenced to play his part in life with his purse as empty as a washed cloth. Afterwards he was assisted by one of his relations, who employed him to trade in silks to your flourishing province, Kwang Tung, and left him his business on his death, and from that time his riches began gradually to accumulate. He married a lady of the surname of Lin; but as she brought him no child, he took a concubine of the Le family, and by her he had five sons, whom he named after the five virtues, Jin, E, Le, Che, and Sin.* Five years ago both he and his wife died, and it is the birth-day of his concubine Le which is being celebrated to-day. There are lanterns, and silk hangings, and dancing, and singing, and plays; and all the officers of the district will be present with no small stir and bustle. You had better go and view the scene."

When Leang Choo had heard this account it occurred to him that the young Emperor was fond of bustle and noise, and

* Benevolence, justice, propriety, knowledge, and fidelity.

might possibly be present. He determined, therefore, to buy a few birth-day candles, and go there under the pretence that he was an old friend of their father, and had come to offer his congratulations. He accordingly changed his clothes for a mean dress, and his hat for a square handkerchief, putting at the same time a pair of torn straw shoes upon his feet. Thus accoutred, he told Hoo Fŭh to take care of his room while he went out for a little; and, having furnished himself with a pair of large candles, proceeded straight to the residence of the Chaes.

When he arrived in front of the mansion he beheld horses prancing amid crowds of men, while drums and other instruments made the heavens ring, and officers of both classes were going and coming without intermission. On this the guardian advanced to the front door, with large strides, and was about to enter, when a servant stopped him, saying, at the same time, in a rough tone, "How is it that such an old man as you does not know the way of the world? The officers have not yet separated from

the feast. You cannot get alms so speedily. Get outside and wait."

"Bold slave," cried Leang Choo as roughly, and in a great rage, "do you not know Leang Shing of Kwang Tung, the sworn brother and beloved friend of your old master. I have come to-day to offer my congratulations. Go in, and tell the gentlemen, your masters, to come out and receive me."

On hearing this speech, the servant went into the hall and announced the message on his knees, not omitting, however, to mention the stranger's tattered habiliments. As soon as Chae Jin received the report, being a man of learning, and of a modest conduct, he inquired of his brothers whether their father when alive had ever made mention of such a man. They all, however, declared that he never had, and that, as cheats were numerous now-a-days, the best plan would be to give him a douceur and send him off.

"By no means," objected Chae Jin. "Our father was of a close disposition, and very seldom communicated any of his

affairs to his wife or children. Let us go out in a body and question the man. If he give a true account of himself we can treat him as an uncle, and thus not frustrate our father's affection for him. But if he can give no account of himself, it will be time enough to reward him and send him away."

To this proposal they all assented very readily, and without disturbing any of the officers went out by a side-door, round to the front of the house, to meet the stranger. At the first glance they perceived that there was something uncommon about the old man's appearance, and accordingly they saluted him in a respectful manner, and inquired whether he were their uncle Leang from Kwang Tung.

Leang Choo returned the salutation and replied, "I am, and you I suppose are my five worthy nephews, Jin, E, Le, Che, and Sin?"

"You are right," said they. "May we ask to what foo and what heen you belong, and also where you met with our father? We beg you will tell us particularly."

"I am from Shun Tĭh hëën," replied their guest, "of Kwang Chow foo in Kwang Tung. My surname is Leang and my name Shing, and my title Hëën Ho. In the city of Canton I formerly taught a school, and it was there I met with your father, on one of his visits to sell silks. Our first meeting was accidental, like that of rushes on the surface of the water, but we became afterwards exceedingly attached to each other. Your father did not discourage my advances, and we pledged ourselves together in the bonds of strictest brotherhood. It is now several years since we separated, but your father charged me when I had leisure to pay him a visit, but when I had arrived here I heard, to my liveliest grief, that your father had died. I was told at the same time that to-day is your mother's birth-day, and I have therefore, in accordance with the promptings of my heart, come here to offer her my congratulations."

The brothers, perceiving that the stranger's speech seemed very probable, and, moreover, that he was a modest man,

and no impostor, inquired where he was then lodging. He told them that he was stopping at the Leang Yung Chang inn, outside the east gate, and upon this they invited him into the hall, and set him in the midst of themselves.

> "Learning brings with it policy and skill,
> And makes a man o'er difficulties rise."

CHAP. XXVI.

> " What though he's clad in homely weeds,
> Laugh not at him for a' that;
> The man of worth and gallant deeds,
> He looks and smiles at a' that.
> For a' that and a' that,
> They're darken'd fools and a' that;
> That seek with silken dress so fine,
> To strike the world and a' that."

THE brothers had just taken their seats on each side of Leang Choo, as we have related in the conclusion of the last chapter, and were about to enter into conversation with him, when an uncle of theirs, named Chae Kwang Hung, made his appearance. This man was of a mean and covetous disposition, despising the poor and paying court to the rich; he was, moreover, a great glutton. If there was no wine in the bottle, his eye-brows were continually contracted; and if there was

no meat in the pot, he could not be got to open his mouth. Seeing the feast ready and waiting, his mouth began to water, and his appetite was ravenous, when just at that moment Chae Jin brought in the stranger. The old man had indeed a grave air, and his countenance was ruddy and his hair white, but still his dress was mean and unsightly; and when he in a bold and easy manner took his seat in the hall, Kwang Hung's excitement became intense. He therefore called Jin aside, and said to him, "The officers and your other worthy guests are all assembled; how is it that instead of leading them to the feast you devote yourself solely to this old fellow? What is he, and who?"

"He is Leang Hèèn Ho, of Kwang Tung," said Jin, "my father's sworn brother."

"Ah!" replied Hung hurriedly, "I would not have you repose much confidence in that."

"I examined him carefully," said Jin in a low tone, "before I received him into the hall. But I have one difficulty with

him; all the seats have been fixed, so that I do not know where to place him."

"You had better go to him in a little," advised the uncle, "and tell him that all the seats had been fixed before his arrival, and that you cannot now change the arrangements, so that you will be obliged to him to occupy your mother's festal chair. He will of course decline this, and then you can set him at a small table by himself."

Chae Jin nodded, and assented to the proposal. He accordingly advanced to Leang Choo, and mentioned it to him, but instead of declining it the guardian merely observed, "Since my worthy nephews so distinguish me, I will comply with their request;" and with this he bowed to the brothers, and took the proffered place.

At the same time all the other guests entered to the feast, but the officers were not a little discomposed by the sight of Leang Choo sitting at the chief table by himself, and inquired of the brothers who he was. "He is from Kwang Tung," said Chae Jin in answer to their questions,

"and named Leang Hëën Hoo, my father's sworn brother. As he got here late, and there was no place for him, I asked him to occupy my mother's seat, not in reality wishing him to do so, but supposing that he would decline the proposal, when I could set him at a small table by himself without treating him uncivilly. However, he made no objections, but at once moved to the place I pointed out. He is guilty, to be sure, of presumption, but being a stranger we could not interfere to check him, and I hope you will not be offended."

On hearing this explanation the guests treated the matter with indifference, and betook themselves to the feast. When the wine had circulated several times, Tso Tae Sin, the sub-prefect of the hëën, observed, that their meeting occurred on the same day as the anniversary of the Genii's peach-day, and that they ought to have some poetry to heighten their joy, and he would therefore call on some of his gifted friends to favour them with a few stanzas.

This suggestion being received with loud applause by all present, the sub-pre-

fect requested Chae Jin to produce a piece of white silk. This being speedily done, and the articles of writing at the same time, Jin handed them to Chin Ming Pei, the prefect of the foo, requesting him to lead the way with his pearly lines.

"I ought to obey your orders," said the prefect; "but, as in the court precedence is regulated by rank, in such meetings as this we village magistrates go by age, and as this is a family feast I must request your venerable uncle to commence, and I will follow him."

Chae Jin accordingly presented the silk to Leang Choo, who at first declined it. All the officers, however, protesting against such an action; "Your talents are high," cried they, "and your learning extensive, and, moreover, in the first place, you occupy the chief seat, in the second, you are the senior of us all, and in the third, you are a stranger from a distant country. You must lead the way."

"Since you urge me in this way," said Leang Choo, "I must comply with your request, notwithstanding my stupidity;"

and with these words he proceeded to a vacant table, and spread out the silk upon it. The officers and all the relations of the family who were present advanced to see him, and the guardian had got the pencil in his hand, and was about to write, when Kwang Hung stopped him.

"You are old," said the fellow; "If you can acquit yourself properly you may write, but if not you will destroy this silk, I am afraid. You had better make a rough draft, and carefully examine it before you transfer it to the silk."

"Whether I can do it well or not, I do not yet know," replied the guardian, with a smile. "Wait until I have written, and then we shall see."

With this he prepared the ink, and began writing, while all the company stood on tiptoe to see him, and when they observed the first line,

"The damsel was no gentle lady maid,"

they were silent, and looked each other in the face. Kwang Hung, indeed, was in a great rage, and said to Chae Jin, "Do you

see how the dog writes out plainly before your face that your mother was originally nothing but a bond maid-servant? You should not allow him to write in such an outrageous way, for I am afraid the other lines will be still more to her disgrace."

Chae Jin, however, was struck with the dragon-like movements of the stranger's pencil, which did not at all betoken one who did not know what he was about, and, moreover, he was incensed by the way in which his uncle had revealed the very matter to be kept secret. He therefore answered in a passion, "Is not such a damsel still a human being? Men of spirit don't care what one's origin may be. Don't talk so much. My venerable uncle's talents and learning will enable him to produce a composition above the common order."

Then turning to Leang Choo he begged him to pardon the other's impertinence, and go on. The guardian nodded his head, took the pencil, and wrote —

"But from the moon she came, a fairy wight;
Five sons she bore—of thieves they played the trade."

When he had written so far he purposely stopped, and looked round upon the guests. All of them, he observed, wore a look of anger mingled with alarm and uneasiness. Chae Jin, also, and his brothers, seeing themselves reflected upon, felt stung, and became very suspicious of him; but Kwang Hung no sooner heard them all read out the last line than he could not restrain his tongue, but, pointing to Leang Choo, in a rage, he exclaimed, "You may calumniate men, and call them thieves or robbers, but, according to the law, a false accusation recoils upon its mover. The grandsire of the foo and the parent of the hëën are both present, and can judge the matter, and our neighbours, the other magistrates and gentlemen here, can be witnesses. The saying is, 'A thief is proved by the articles produced.' What articles can you produce in the present case?"

"If there be articles forthcoming," said Leang Choo, "what then?"

"If there be," replied Hung, "I will suffer the punishment due to my nephews; but if there be not you are guilty of calum-

riating the innocent, and must be punished with thirty blows of the great bamboo, notwithstanding you are their uncle."

"Agreed," said the guardian, "agreed." And while he was speaking he concluded the verses.

> "The damsel was no gentle lady maid,
> But from the moon she came, a fairy wight;
> Five sons she bore—of thieves they play'd the trade,
> Yet no man's gold they filch'd, nor jewels bright;
> But ever by the pearly pool they stray'd,
> And stole the peach to hail her natal light.
> Bliss as the eastern ocean wide be hers for aye,
> And life coeval with the hills without decay."

When he had finished the whole hall resounded with the praises of the guests, and the five brothers, full of joy, entreated him out of regard to them to forgive the impertinence of their uncle. They requested him also to write his name, that it might be preserved as an heirloom in the family. The guardian accordingly took the pencil, but wrote merely "Leang, of Kwang Tung," and immediately after he took his leave hurriedly, and departed.

The spectators, struck by his manners,

unlike those of a common man, by the dragon-like style of his writing, and by the stranger manner of his departure, carefully examined the name which he left. After thinking over it for a time, the sub-prefect of the hëën struck the table, and exclaimed, "I have heard that the Emperor is travelling in disguise, and that lately he arrived at Squire Loo's in Sung Keang foo. While there, on account of some business which came to his knowledge, he degraded all the officers, both civil and military, of the city, and ordered them to be kept in prison till his will should be further signified. The prefect of that foo, Lo Chaou Hwig, being an old friend of mine, privately sent me word of the transaction to put me on my guard. And now does not this name here make it probable that our guest was Leang Choo of Kw'ang Tung?"

On hearing this speech his whole audience became frightened, and lost their colour. "It must be so," said they all; and then they inquired of Chae Jin and his brothers whether they had treated the

stranger disrespectfully or not. Jin assured them that they had not; and with this he began to reproach Kwang Hung, saying, "If the guardian be offended it will all be owing to you." The rest also joined in rating him for his impudence, so that he could not open his mouth, but fretted at his mistake.

The officers then inquired of Jin if he knew where the guardian was stopping. Having questioned the stranger on this point at his first arrival, Jin was able to inform them, asking at the same time what they thought would be the best plan of action.

"We," said they, "will instantly return home, and prepare presents with which to go and inquire after his repose. You had also better go and beg pardon from him. You will see how he behaves, and can act accordingly."

Having determined upon this, the feast was instantly broken up, and the guests separated and returned home. In the mean time Leang Choo had returned to his inn. Immediately on his arrival, he

said to his landlord, " Whether now would you like to be made an officer or a rich man ?"

" How can you ask such a strange question, sir ?" replied his host. " Without influence and without ability what office or what riches can I obtain ?"

" If you wish it," said the guardian again, " I can find a door to introduce you to a small and unimportant office."

" I don't know a single character," reasoned the man, " and am an entire stranger to the business of a magistrate. Moreover, I am too old to fill any office, and since you have the ability I shall feel extremely obliged by your putting me in a way to gain a little money."

" If I assist you," replied the guardian, " you will have several hundred taels at least, and perhaps a thousand. It is now dark, but to-morrow you will have all the magistrates of both classes coming here to inquire for me. You must not tell them truly that I have gone, but pretend that I am still in your house, and not yet out of bed. If they question you further, don't

be afraid, but go into the house, and then go out again, and tell them that the guardian is busy, and cannot see them, but bid them return with diligence and caution to the performance of their duties. As to the presents which they will bring, you can receive them.

"If the Chaes come you can tell them that the guardian does not look upon them as guilty, but orders their uncle, in consequence of his contempt of the poor, cringing to the rich, and rudeness, to be conducted to the office of the hëën, and there beaten with thirty strokes of the great bamboo. Tell them, moreover, that if the punishment be not fully inflicted I will punish both him and the magistrate together on discovering the fraud. If the brothers bring presents with them you can receive them also.

"Next day they will all come again, and you can then say to them, 'The guardian went away this morning, and on his departure left word for you that it is his disposition to reward the faithful and punish the crafty, and that if they recorded

these words in their memories it would be the same as if they were continually being admitted to his presence.'"

"Are you drunk, good sir?" asked the landlord on hearing this speech. "We may jest about other matters, but on such an affair as this a joke will not be unaccompanied with trouble to me as well as to you, should the officers come to the knowledge of it."

"You are of the same surname with myself," replied Leang Choo. "How should I dare improperly to involve you in trouble! I tell you truly; I am 'The kingdom protector, the guardian Leang Choo;'" and with this he produced a golden seal to show to Leang Yung Chang. When that worthy saw it he knelt down on the earth, and hardly knowing what he was about, knocked his head on the ground, and said, "I have eyes, yet could not see the T'ai Shan. Pardon me."

"There is no reason why I should be angry with you," said the minister. "Bring me out a sheet of white paper, and I will impress my seal upon it, and give it you.

If the officers treat you roughly after my departure, you need only show it to them, and, moreover, I will write down the matter about Chae Kwang Hung." Full of joy, Yung Chang knocked his head upon the ground, and received the paper back again. Having made these arrangements with the landlord, Leang Choo ordered Hoo Fŭh to get ready his baggage, and immediately proceeded to another inn for the night, intending to commence his quest for the Emperor on the morrow.

As he had told Yung Chang, all the officers next day came to the inn, with cards and presents, to inquire after his repose. Chang answered them as he had been instructed, on which they entrusted their presents to him, desiring him to transmit them to the guardian. He accordingly received them one by one, and went in. In a short time he came out, and repeated to them the speech which had been put into his mouth, and the officers, seeing that the reproof was not very severe, began to feel at rest, and departed.

The Chaes also came to the inn entreat-

ing pardon, and Yung Chang reported to them the guardian's words, received their presents, and sent them away.

Next day all the officers made their appearance a second time, when Chang told them, on his knees, that the guardian had gone, but had left some admonitions for them, and also given him a seal to show them. They looked at it accordingly, and seeing the order about Kwang Hung, which was written on the same paper, the sub-prefect sent for him, and saw the punishment inflicted upon him as prescribed, only that the blows were not very heavy.

When they had all gone, the landlord shut his door, and examined the various presents. Finding that they amounted to twelve hundred taels in gold, and an immense quantity of different kinds of silk, he began to reflect on his having kept that inn all his lifetime, and done his utmost to save for so many years, without being able to save a single cash, but barely making a living, while now he was become a rich man, through the accidental kindness of the guardian, and had got such a quantity

of gold and other articles. I had better, thought he, with this unexpected fall of fortune, return to my native village, and pass the evening of my life in pleasure, instead of remaining amid the bustle of this inn. He accordingly engaged a small vessel to convey all his furniture, and, having given up his house to its owner, he joyfully departed for his home.

"Riches and honours come not when we wish;
One lends his help, and suddenly they're ours."

CHAP. XXVII.

> " Fast treads the winter upon summer's heels,
> And years and months revolve on ceaseless wheels.
> Once bursts a crash, our day dreams all are oe'r:
> Vain is repentance—time returns no more."

OUR story reverts again to the Emperor and his attendant. While they were rambling about, as we have related, they arrived one day at the district of Choo Chow, and after securing a lodging in one of the towns, proceeded to take a walk through the streets. Just as they were leaving the house for that purpose, a company of young men, with a bold and daring mien, and all carrying weapons, passed by. His majesty, amazed at the sight, returned into the house, and asked his host what was the matter, that people were allowed, in broad daylight, to parade the street in crowds and with weapons.

" You are a stranger," replied the land-

lord, "and ignorant of the circumstances of our neighbourhood. There is here a wild and violent fellow, called Kung Sun Keang; being brother of Kung Sun Tsae, president of the board of works, and having himself obtained by purchase a small command in the cavalry, his power and influence are very considerable, so that he has formed a connection with several men of spirit in various quarters, and calls himself the invincible Lo Shing the Second. At the foot of the hill there in the west he has erected a stage for boxing, on the front of which he has put up an inscription, that if any person can hit him a single blow he shall be rewarded with a hundred taels of silver, whatever be his rank; if he can give him a kick, he shall get two hundred; and, if he can knock him down, no fewer than a thousand. The inscription also says, that as when two tigers fight, one of them is killed, the same must be expected in the case of two heroes; but that should he himself be killed, no vengeance will be required for his death; and should any person be killed

by him, a present of two hundred taels shall be made to the dead, a coffin be provided, and the body prepared for interment, and then delivered to the relations to be carried home; and should there be no relations to perform that office, Keang himself will perform a sacrifice to him with the said sum, and bury him on a high hill of the neighbourhood, — the only condition being that no annoyance to him shall follow such an event.

" The stage is open for a period of one hundred days, of which this is the ninetieth; but yet no match for him has been found."

Chow Yung's disposition was kindled by this account. "According to your statement," said he, "he acts with great justice and honour; to-morrow I will go and have a few rounds with him."

At these words the landlord took a survey of Yung's person, and then inquired his surname, name, and residence; asking, also, whether he had any rank himself, or had any brothers in the employment of the court?"

The general was surprised at such questions, and replied, " I belong to Shing King, my surname is Hwang, and my name is Jin. My uncle and I are come hither on a visit to our friends, and have no rank ourselves, nor any brothers who serve as members at court."

" In such a case," said the other, shaking his head, " I would advise you not to go, and provoke the challenger."

" Why not ? " inquired the Emperor.

" He has put forth the inscription which I have mentioned, indeed," replied the man ; " but his whole life has been marked by injustice, insolence, and oppression of the poor. In consequence of this, though there are many individuals in the neighbourhood who are superior to him, no one has come forward to measure strength with him, and his only opponents have been strangers who were ignorant of his wickedness, and foolishly threw away their lives. Moreover, all the officers in the district are on very friendly terms with him, and the colonel, Seu Seang, stands to him in the relation of adopted father. It is on

these grounds that I would advise you not to go."

"It cannot be," rejoined the Emperor, "that among all the officers of the city there is not one upright man."

"I have heard," answered the other, "that the captain and the prefect are pure and upright officers, and on Keang's father's birth-day, when all the other officers went with presents to offer their congratulations, these did not accompany them. My inn is on the great road, and as the officers had to pass it, both in going and coming, I am quite sure of this circumstance."

When he had given them this information, he ordered the evening meal, and invited his two guests to the table. They accordingly took their places, and while they were eating, his majesty expressed to his companion his indignation at the conduct of the various magistrates in the places to which they had come. "After what our landlord has said," added he, "you had better not go to the stage, for should you be taken in any of their snares, what could I do?"

"Let your majesty put your mind at rest," replied Yung; "I know how to proceed. To-morrow I will go to the stage, and see the boaster's skill. Being assured on that point, I will go forward, while you look on at a distance. Should any thing deceitful occur, you can go to the court of the prefect, and instruct him to act according to the emergency. Thus I shall be secure from danger."

The Emperor was obliged to accede to this plan, and soon after they retired for the night. Next day, after breakfast, Chow Yung locked the door of their room, and gave the key in charge to the landlord, saying that they were going out for a stroll, and would soon be back. They went out at the door accordingly, and had no sooner got into the street than they saw crowds of people, like strings of ants, all saying, that they were going to see the fighting. The two strangers mingled in the multitude, and in the course of a few le arrived at the stage.

Chow Yung carefully ran over it with his eyes, and found it not a little bold and

fierce-looking. On the left was displayed the picture of a dragon and tiger fighting, and on the right that of a young lion playing with a ball. In front was displayed the fabulous bird Fung Hwang, with outspread wings, and behind was a painting of the battle of Chih Peih. At the ends of the stage hung two boards having inscribed upon them the couplet,

> "Stout heroes of the empire, all come nigh!
> The chief of Choo Chow will your mettle try."

Right in the middle there was raised a board, bearing the title, "Strength-comparing Stage," and by its side hung the following proclamation:—

"Seu, by imperial commission colonel of Choo Chow and other places, having been promoted three steps, and his merit having been ten times recorded, therefore makes this proclamation to be suspended on the boxing stage. The lord of the stage, Kung Sun Keang, having been instructed in all the arts of 'the science,' wishes to try the mettle of the heroes and

men of spirit of the empire; and I therefore exhibit the following regulations:-

"1st. No soldier under my orders can ascend the stage.

"2nd. No professed disciple of Confucius, Laou Tsze, or Hwih, can ascend the stage.

"3rd. No female can ascend the stage, lest the intermixture of men and women should be injurious to morals.

"4th. No man can ascend the stage with sharp weapons. The fight must be maintained with fists alone.

"5th. No man can ascend the stage without first truly declaring his province, family, and name.

"With the above exceptions, every person of ability, whatever be his colour, can ascend the stage and show his skill.

"The stage is open for a period of a hundred days, and there can be no future disputes about what takes place upon it. Let every one reverently obey, and offer no opposition.

"Ching Tĭh's xth year, 5th month, 1st day."

There was another inscription on the right, of the same purport with what the landlord had related; and when Chow Yung had done reading it, the colonel arrived, attended by more than a hundred soldiers, who took their stand in two ranks below the stage. At the same time their commander took his seat in a pavilion in front; and about sixty of Keang's servants, like so many wolves or tigers, were led forward by himself, and stationed beside the soldiers. The challenger first paid his respects to the colonel, and then turned and mounted the stage. Having changed his dress, he came forward to the front; and, having bowed, addressed the spectators: —

"Strong braves!" said he, "I have opened this stage for a period of a hundred days, and am indebted to you for sparing me and yielding to me hitherto. To-day is the ninety-first day. If any of you are strong enough, I request you to ascend and give me your instructions; but let no one ascend without strength, for my hands and feet know no kindness, and may make

a mistake about his life. If they gave way to feelings of kindness, it would injure my reputation."

These words were hardly finished, when a stout fellow beneath jumped upon the stage. Keang looked at him, and became afraid. He asked, however, his name, surname, and residence.

"I am from Shing King," said Chow Yung, for it was he, "and called Fung Chŏ Shă. Hearing your haughty speech, expressing such disdain for the heroes of the empire, I am come here to request you to go and see his majesty the ruler of the dead."

On hearing this speech, Keang restrained his passion, and surveyed the person of the speaker. Seeing that his appearance was extraordinary, that he was twelve feet high, and eight feet round the waist, and reflecting that he had sprung on the stage, which was fifteen feet high, at one leap, without being put out of breath, and hearing the roughness and decision of his tones, he felt assured that

he was no common man, and became quite afraid.

He therefore replied, "Oh! it is my brother Fung. Excuse my want of respect. Since you have come to instruct me, I could not fail to derive improvement from you. But you are from a distance, and I am afraid that when our hands and feet meet together our harmony may be lost; and, therefore, here are fifty taels of silver, which may show you my respect, and furnish you with tea and betel. We need not engage in the ugly play of boxing."

"I am not come here for gain," replied Yung. "I am but a stranger, travelling through this place to see some friends, and would not have interfered, according to the old saying, 'As level water does not flow—keep silence amid justice.' But when I saw that you had erected this lofty stage, in contempt of all men of spirit, however distant, I felt impelled to come forward and see of what stuff you are. If you can stand against me for three

rounds I will readily acknowledge your superiority; but if you decline fighting with me, you must instantly shut this stage, and before all the spectators knock your head three times to the ground, and acknowledge your great guilt. Hereafter, moreover, you must hide your head, and stir up no further mischief, — depending on your power to oppress the weak. On these conditions I will spare you."

When Kung Sun Keang heard these proposals, fire glowed within him, and he raised his fist and aimed a blow at Chow Yung. The latter, however, caught his wrist and held it fast, saying, fiercely, "Since you have the courage why endeavour to strike at me unawares?"

Such was the effect of Yung's grasp, that all the bones of his opponent became soft and weak, so that he could make no resistance. He wished, indeed, to fly, but Yung advanced before him, and stopped his way, so that he was compelled to show fight. In the course of two or three rounds, however, the general caught hold

of him, and in a tumult of rage, without thinking what might be the consequences, threw him down with all his force among the spears of the soldiers.

> "The hero died ere half his days were gone,
> And merely left to history a name."

CHAP. XXVIII.

"Like ocean waves, now calm, now toss'd,
Where human foresight all is lost;
Men's actions, whether good or ill,
Depend upon their own free will.
Heav'n's ruler still waits the event;
No warning, no advice, is sent.
But when the end doth come, in vain
Repentance longs to live again."

The brave bearing of Chow Yung had taken by surprise the soldiers who were stationed beneath the stage, so that they stood motionless in terror, like so many statues of wood, not daring to advance to the rescue of the challenger. Such indeed was their consternation, that it was not until Keang had been thrown right upon their weapons, and the blood flowed from all his body, and his throat was cut, that they moved forward. But it was then too late, the boaster's life was extinct. The colonel was horror-struck at the spec-

tacle, and the colour left his cheeks, but he fiercely commanded the soldiers to secure the combatant, who was obliged to allow himself to be bound, and then gave orders to carry home the body of his son, and have it put into a coffin for a time. At the same time he told a guard to conduct the prisoner to his office, there to be tried. The spectators then slowly separated, most of them grieving for the fate of Yung, and returned home shaking their heads and putting out their tongues.

The Emperor witnessed the capture of his attendant from a distance, and was advancing to rescue him, when Yung made a sign which his majesty understood, and immediately after he took his way to the prefect. On arriving at the office, he told a servant to inform the magistrate that Choo Haou Chaou, from the capital, wanted to see him. The prefect, who was a man of Chĕĕ Keang, and named Se Kwŏ Lan, no sooner heard the announcement, than he understood that his visitor was the Emperor, and became so frightened that his back even was bathed with sweat. He

gave orders, however, to have the incense-table arranged, and the hall door thrown open, and then went out upon his knees to receive his majesty. Ching Tĭh passed directly into the hall behind, and took his seat with his face towards the south, when the prefect performed the ceremonies of audience; after which the monarch told him to arise, and be seated.

"Sire!" inquired Kwŏ Lan, "on what business have you come here?"

On this question the Emperor related his dream, and concluded by informing him of this last adventure of Chow Yung. When the narration was finished, the prefect wrote a card, and gave it to a messenger to carry to the colonel's, charging the man not to let it be known that the Emperor was there. The card contained an order to the colonel to bring his prisoner to the prefect's office for trial, and found that officer just about to open court, and extort by torture from Chow Yung a confession of wilful murder. He would thus have had an excuse for condemning him, and been able to revenge the death of

his adopted son, and gratify the affection they had cherished towards each other when alive. The prefect's card, however, filled him with fears and doubts. "This prisoner," thought he, "must be nearly connected with the prefect, else how could the latter have learned so speedily what I have done, and come forward to demand to conduct his trial. There is something more here than appears on the outside; I shall go with the prisoner myself, and see the prefect's conduct. I hardly think he will dare to set himself against us; and thus reflecting, he made arrangements to proceed to Kwŏ Lan's office.

In the mean time the messenger flew back with the news of Seu Seang's movements; on learning which the Emperor called the prefect, and instructed him how to proceed. Kwŏ Lan accordingly threw open the middle door, and went out to meet the colonel. They then entered the hall together, and after they had taken their seats, as host and guest, Leang asked the other for what purpose he had called him.

"I heard," said the prefect, "that you had seized this high offender on account of Kong Sun Keang, and I merely wished to see him face to face, to find out how he could have the boldness to act as he has done."

When he had finished this reply, the colonel ordered Yung to be brought forward; but Kwŏ Lan, as soon as he saw him, descended the steps, loosed his bonds with his own hands, and having conducted him to a high seat, paid his respects to him, and said "Pardon me, general, for being so dilatory, and thereby allowing you to be disturbed."

Seu Seang was exceedingly discomposed by this proceeding, and said, "Noble prefect, why do you let such a criminal loose? Should his honour of the board of works come to know it, both you and I will find ourselves in trouble."

"You are guilty of numerous capital crimes," replied the other, with a smile; "and do you still dare to bandy words? But I will let you see your danger plainly."

With this he proceeded to the hall behind, telling the attendants to arrange the incense table. In a little he brought out an imperial decree, and, advancing with it into the midst, ordered the hall to be opened, and every one to be in waiting.

The colonel could not understand the reason of these movements, and was in the greatest consternation; and when the prefect took his place in the judgment-seat, and ordered him in a fierce tone to kneel down, he asked to whom he should kneel. At this question Kwŏ Lan struck the table, and cried, "Open your dog's eyes, and see what this is." Seu Seang opened his eyes, and seeing an imperial decree folded up, knelt down, and said, "Of what crime have I been guilty? and why do you proceed in this way?"

"Do you say that you have no crime? Why? Who is this criminal? He is a general of the court, come hither for the purpose of observation. Because you indulged your adopted son in his outrageous and imprudent career, depending on his influence to insult his inferiors, the whole

neighbourhood stood in dread of him as of a tiger; and you moreover allowed him to build that boxing stage, practise all sorts of mischief, and ensnare men of spirit from every quarter. On the stage, however, there was an inscription plainly declaring that, though it was to be expected when two bold men fought together one of them should die, yet death and life should be alike uninquired into. In these circumstances why did you carry the general home to your office? Plainly it was with the intention of urging him to confess himself guilty of wilful murder, that you might avenge your son's death. The proverb says, 'Actions are often contrary to words,' and this is an exemplification of it. How can you be called the parent of the people? Had you met to-day with any other person instead of the general here, you would have been digging a pit to ensnare and to destroy men of spirit."

To this speech the colonel could make no reply; but he put on boldness enough to observe, " To be sure I am guilty, but

you are only a poor prefect. What can you do to me?"

When Chow Yung heard these words, he struck the table in a great rage, and exclaimed, "Do you say that no man can do any thing to you? I will let you see something;" and with this he came forward, took the Emperor's decree, opened it, and read to the following effect: —

"The Emperor, by Heaven's appointment, continuing the circle of succession, intimates his will: Seu Seang, the colonel of Choo Chow, has been guilty of allowing the improprieties of his adopted son, who has perpetrated much wickedness in dependence on his influence, and despised and oppressed the people. I have, moreover, discovered that most of the officers of that district, both civil and military, have joined with them on friendly terms in the commission of their crimes. Such conduct is detestable.

"The prefect, She Kwŏ Lan, however, and the captain of the left camp, Ho Wăn Che, are pure and upright officers, exercising their functions according to the

principles of justice, and having no connection with the powerful and crafty.

"I now transmit my decree, ordering these two to punish colonel Seu Seang with sixty strokes of the great bamboo, and then degrade him from office, and keep him in prison till they have further orders from myself. The other officers also must be cashiered, and imprisoned in their own offices till I further determine.

"Let all who read this decree perform the ceremonies of audience."

When the prefect heard the last words he advanced forward and knelt in compliance with them. Having done this, he returned to the judgment-seat, and ordered Seu Seang to be stript of his clothes, stretched on his face upon the ground, and beaten with the appointed number of blows, so that the colonel's flesh was laid bare, and torn, and his piteous cries reached the heavens. When the punishment was completed, he was sent to prison, with strict orders to the gaoler to guard him carefully.

The prefect next sent the decree to cap-

tain Ho Wăn Che, and along with him cashiered the various officers, and imprisoned them in their own gaols, to await further orders. At the same time a messenger was despatched to the inn for the baggage of the two travellers; and while this man was absent on this business, Kwŏ Lan entered the hall behind, along with Chow Yung, to see his majesty. Ching Tĭh there delivered the copy of a decree to the prefect, telling him to send it to the governor of Shan Se.

That officer was charged to degrade the commissioner of inspection, Gwio Wăn Kwang, and put him in prison, till a further decree should be issued concerning him. He was also to take the sub-prefect of Wan Shwing hëën, Tseaou Ts'ing, out of prison, and appoint him to the commissioner's office, and when the period of his duties was completed, Ts'ing was to proceed to the capital to see his majesty, when he would receive another appointment.

The prefect received the decree, and put it in a place of safety. He then ordered a feast to be got ready for the

Emperor and his companion, who jollily inverted the bottles till they were quite drunk. Next day his majesty prepared to resume his rambling, and charged Kwŏ Lan to manage his business with care, saying, that when he returned to the capital on the expiration of his office, he should be promoted and rewarded. Lan did not dare to detain the sacred person, and the Emperor, with Chow Yung, left the office, and proceeded towards Sung Këàng foo.

"To know the people's various wrongs, he must
Thro' the empire see the impure magistrates."

CHAP. XXIX.

"Boldly through Keäng Nan the Emperor goes,
And rids his people of their hated foes.
Happy Chow Yuen, thy filial love he prov'd,
And bless'd thee with the good, the fair, the lov'd."

It was not long after the Emperor and Chow Yung resumed their route, before they reached the borders of Sung Keäng. Unfortunately, however, they had mistaken their way, and had travelled for half the day over high hills and lofty ridges, along bamboo-fringed paths, and through clumps of firs, without meeting with a single farm-house or market village; and after continuing their journey for twenty or thirty le further without any better success, it began to get dusk, and the sun set behind the western hills. By this time the Emperor felt both hungry and thirsty, besides being out of spirits, in consequence of the solitude of the way in

which they had journeyed. He said, therefore, to his companion, "We have now travelled a whole day without seeing an inn, a villager, or even a traveller: I suppose we have mistaken the road. But now it is dark, and I am quite hungry; what is to be done?" "The trouble is of your majesty's own seeking," replied Yung, "I dissuaded you several times from your purpose of visiting this province, but you would not listen to my advice, and have perilled your royal person in these strange parts, from a desire to extend your field of vision and of knowledge. You see the trouble and fatigue to which it has exposed you. Had you acted differently, however, and remained in your royal halls and galleries, surrounded by pearls, and reposing on your golden couch, you could not have learned the hardships and sufferings of the people, in their daily strivings to get a few measures of rice, to supply the wants of their children and parents. Nor, moreover, could you have known the conduct of those corrupt magistrates and the official squirearchy, who are ever op-

pressing the people to fill their own purses, and, in fact, those galleries for song and dancing, terraces erected by the dukes, marquisses, earls, and viscounts, are all the labour of the people's sweat and blood. I hope your majesty will reflect upon my words, and not forget the miseries of your subjects.

"But to come to another topic—what sorrow and anxiety must your royal mother be now enduring on your account? I beseech you to return with me to the capital to-morrow, to solace her mind with the pleasure belonging to your heavenly relationship, and escape yourself all the hardships of travelling. This is indeed the profound desire of your poor servant."

"I have not come here," said the prince, "for the pleasure of seeing and hearing, but because I was warned to do so in a dream. I must first find a valiant general, and then I will return; for it is not possible that the divine visitor should have deceived me. Moreover, in high antiquity, it was customary for the sovereigns to make a quinquennial tour through their

dominions, and, therefore, my present visit to these districts, degrading the unworthy officers, and ridding my people of their oppressors, befits the heart of a monarch; and as to travelling through the dust and wind, I find it very pleasant.

"Formerly Jin Tsung, of the Sung dynasty, said, 'My heart runs every day once over the whole empire,' and the expression is praised by the historian, as showing a distinguished prince: how much more am I worthy of commendation, who traverse in person these remote quarters, and inquire into the condition of my subjects! You had better resume your route, and go forward; we shall again deliberate about what is to be done."

They recommenced their journey accordingly, and ere long came upon a woodman, working at his vocation in a clump of fine large trees. Rejoiced at the sight, Ching Tĭh told his companion to go forward, and inquire whether there was any lodging-house in the neighbourhood. Chow Yung therefore went up to the wood-cutter, and

put the question, inquiring also in what part of the country they were.

"This place," replied the individual whom he addressed, "belongs to the suburbs of the city of Sung Keang, and this spot is the front of Yēēn Tsze Hill; but you will find no lodging-house nearer than that city."

"And how far is the city distant?" inquired Yung, considerably disconcerted by the former reply.

"It is still thirty le off," said the man again, "and I doubt, gentlemen, from your appearance, whether you will be able to reach it."

The emperor could no longer be restrained from taking part in the discourse. "This being the case," said he, "I would ask if you can direct us to any village or farm, where we may ask a lodging."

At this question the wood-cutter shook his head, and replied, "All this district is either wilderness or barren mountain, without either farm-house or village, where you could ask a lodging. Where do you

come from, that you are such strangers to this part of the country?"

"We are from the capital," replied Ching Tĭh, "and coming hither on a visit to some friends in the city, we mistook our way, and have travelled this whole day without seeing the smoke of men or a single lodging house. We are now hungry, and find it difficult to continue our march, while your words show us that it is as hard to advance as to go back. But since you say there are no dwellings of men hereabout, how is it that you have remained to so late an hour without returning home?"

"My statement is correct," rejoined the other, "but I have a poor shed myself at no great distance from this, for the convenience of my occupation as a wood-cutter. And now, since you talk of being hungry and tired, if you do not reject my mean and narrow accommodations, I shall be happy if you will rest with me for the night."

His majesty heard the proposal with delight, and inquired the surname and name of the stranger, and also to what

part of the empire he originally belonged, and whether he had other inmates in his family besides himself.

"I am called Chow Yuen," replied the man, "and am a native of this district, and have only an aged mother to reside with me. Will you favour me with your surnames and names, that I may announce to to her?"

"My surname," said the Emperor, "is Hwang Lun, and this is my nephew Hwang Yin. We count ourselves fortunate in meeting with one so kind as you to receive us into your house for the night. This happiness might serve for three lives."

On this reply Chow Yuen apologised for his want of respect, and then taking up a bundle of wood, he led the way to his house, which proved only to be about two le off. When they reached the door he requested his two guests to wait a little while he went in to inform his mother of their arrival. He accordingly pushed open the door leaving them outside, and stated to his mother his meeting with the travellers, and that he had invited them home.

"I could not but be surprised," said the old woman, "at the flame of the candle's burning so brightly last night, and the bird of joy sounding his note this morning; for how could it be thought that we should be honoured with visitors in this retired and mean shed? It is an old saying, that he who does not entertain strangers will himself find no entertainer in a strange land. The only thing I am concerned about is, lest we should seem to fail in paying them due respect from the poverty of our accommodations."

"Don't trouble yourself on that head," said her son, "for I explained our circumstances to them, and when they seemed notwithstanding to be quite content, I brought them with me. You had better get tea ready, while I go out to receive them."

In accordance with this arrangement the old lady passed into the cook-room, and Chow Yuen went out and invited the strangers to enter. Ching Tĭh and his companion immediately followed their host, and entered the house, being obliged to stoop, however, as they crossed the

threshold. After wiping the table and some chairs, Yuen requested them to be seated, and went behind to the cook-room to bring out the tea. The leaf was but the production of the Yèèn Tsze hill; but the travellers were not in a condition to distinguish between good and bad, but drank off several cups in succession.

> "The thirsty quick their water drink,
> Nor ask from whence it came:
> Eager the hungry eat their food,
> Nor question of its name."

When they had finished the tea, Ching Tĭh requested that the mother of their host would come out, and allow them to pay their respects to her, and at the same time he gave Yuen a tael, and told him to purchase with it some wine and vegetables.

The young man went in to communicate the wish of the strangers to his mother, but the old lady was startled at the request. "My clothes," said she, "are ragged and torn, so that I am quite unfit to be seen by gentlemen. Go out, and tell them that I am rendered incapable by

age and deafness of responding to their courtesies, and entreat them to excuse me." She then perceived the silver in her son's hand, and asked where he had got it. Yuen told her that the guests had given it him to purchase some vegetables.

"At such a distance from the city," observed the matron, "it is impossible to procure either wine or any thing savoury. Go out, and explain this to them, and say that I have prepared some coarse rice and vegetable soup. Return the money at the same time, and on no account receive any thing from them. When you have done that, then come back, and consult with me."

Her son dutifully observed all these injunctions, and retired again to the cook-room.

"Millions of money profit nought:
For pious offspring can't be bought."

CHAP. XXX.

"What! though thou'rt poor, let no repining sound
Come from thy lips. The ancients well have said,
Fate's judgment hangs not on our present lot.
Stablish thine heart, hold fast integrity,
For if thou doest not so,—what! tho' thou'rt rich,
Vain is thy wealth—'twill surely come to nought."

Chow Yuen asked his mother, on rejoining her, what she had to suggest about entertaining their visitors. "We have nothing tasty," said the matron, "to set before them."

"We have;" replied the son; "we have; why not take the remains of peas' paste which was left after this day's meal, and dress for them?"

"Such leavings will never do," said she, rather sharply.

"If they will not do," said the youth again, "what is to be done, for we have nothing else in the house?"

Just as he made this observation a hen began to cackle behind the cook-room, which the young man no sooner heard than he exclaimed with joy, "This will do; you can take this hen and boil it for them."

"That might do," observed the mother, "but I have set my mind on making a wife to you out of that hen."

"What do you say, mother? I suppose you want her to fill my bed with eggs."

"No indeed," replied the old woman. "This hen will bring forth so many chickens, which I will sell when they have become large, and buy a pig; when the pig is large I will sell it, and buy a calf; when the calf is large I will sell it, and the money will enable me to secure your marriage. Is it not plain, that that event will be based on this hen?"

"I fear, mother," replied the son, laughing, "that it is of no use to talk in that way, for it is doubtful whether my life would last through all these changes. However, I don't want to be married, so you can take the fowl, and cook it for our guests. Another day we may perhaps

experience the benefit of their assistance. The ancients have said, 'Act kindly and not niggardly.' Don't hesitate or doubt, but quickly boil the hen, for I am afraid that we prolong their hunger."

With these words Chow Yuen left the cook-room, and his mother, perceiving the propriety of his words, being anxious herself to treat the strangers well, instantly did as he requested; boiled the fowl, and cut it up into pieces. This done, she called him again, to carry it out into the hall, and charged him not to comply, if the guests should request him to sit with them at table, lest through his rudeness he should fail in some of the proper observances. "I have plenty of the meat here," added she; "you can come, and eat with me."

The young man accordingly took up the fowl, along with some rice and vegetables, but before he reached the hall his nose was tickled with the flavour of the meat, and his throat began to itch. Unable to resist his appetite, he put a small bit into his mouth, and was about to swal-

low it, when, lo! the spirits who watched over Ching Tĭh, offended at the meanness, caused the flesh to stick fast in his throat. The poor fellow could not bear the pain, but cried out in such a way as to alarm his majesty, who came forward to inquire what was the matter. As soon as he saw the young man's eyes full of tears, and that he was unable to speak, he understood the cause, and said to him, "Chow Yuen, Chow Yuen, you must have been tasting the food before you presented it, and so have aroused the indignation of the spirits; but I freely forgive you; swallow the piece."

These words were scarcely uttered when the sufferer obtained relief. He forthwith set out the various dishes upon the table, and requested his two guests to eat. Ching Tĭh told him to sit at the table with them, and also inquired whether his mother had reserved any for herself. Yuen replied, that she had plenty, and begged to be excused for not accepting their invitation himself; and with these words he retreated within to join his mother.

"I feel much attached to this young man," said the Emperor to Chow Yung, while they were eating; "his filial piety is remarkable, and, notwithstanding his poverty, he treats us well and respectfully. It is an old saying, 'That a faithful officer is the sequel of a filial son,' and such an intelligent youth as this cannot continue long in a poor and mean condition. I feel inclined to adopt him as my son; what do you think of such a proposal?"

"Whether this lad shall continue poor," replied the general, "or become rich, is all in your majesty's gift; but if it be said that fate has no happiness or favour in store for him, I would ask, how it was truly decreed that you should come hither. Moreover, had we not met with him this evening I do not know where we should have been now, so that it is only reasonable that you should assist him, but as to your adopting him or not, that entirely depends upon your majesty's decision."

The Emperor, on hearing the reply, made up his mind, and in a little, when they had finished their meal, Chow Yuen

came out to remove the glasses and dishes. He next swept a couch for them to sleep upon, after which they all retired for the night.

The next day, when they had dressed themselves, Ching Tĭh called the young man, and inquired his age, and whether he was married. It was with a sigh that Yuen replied, "I have reached my eighteenth year, but being obliged from my poverty, and the age of my mother, to spend my days cutting wood on this hill for a livelihood, as might be expected I have not experienced the fortune about which you ask."

"I have observed," said the Emperor again, "that though poor, you are contented with your lot, respectful towards strangers, and earnestly studious to serve your mother. I am, therefore, sorry for the hardships of your condition, and feel inclined to receive you as my adopted son. Let your mother and you come to my house, where you can have plenty to eat, with ease and pleasure, and I will afterwards arrange about your marriage. It is

a pity you should remain solitary upon this barren mountain in the wilderness, exposed to the wind and frost. How do you view my proposal?"

The youth received the words with as much joy as if they had come from Heaven; and retired within to communicate them to his mother. The old lady's pleasure was as great as that of her son. "Go out," said she, "and pay him reverence, as your adopted father, and do not forget your cousin who is with him."

Chow Yuen accordingly returned to the hall rejoicing. His happiness rendered his faculties more lively, and he requested Ching Tĭh to occupy a higher seat, while he knelt hastily down, and said in a loud voice, "Adopting father, receive the homage of your son." Having done this, he arose, and saluted Yung, who returned his politeness somewhat confused. His majesty then drew forth from his breast a round jewel, an heirloom of the empire, transmitted to him from his father. The characters, "Royal pearl of ten thousand years," were engraved upon it, and there

hung down from it a tassel made of thread of gold, while upon each side of the characters were representations of a dragon and a fury flying and prancing. There was not one of all the ministers of the court who did not know the jewel to be royal property; and it was on this account that the Emperor gave it to Chow Yuen, to be kept as a memorial and a sign.

"In three months," said he, as he gave the above article to the young man, "you must repair to the capital, and search out the high guardian, Leang Choo. Carefully remember my name, Choo Haou Cheaou, and request the guardian to conduct you to me. If he hesitates to repose confidence in you, show him this jewel, which will at once make him accede to your request. But you must on no account lose this article, or allow any other person to see it."

With these words his majesty took out a coin of gold and twenty taels of silver, and gave them to his adopted son, in order to supply him and his mother with necessaries for a time, and bear the expenses of his

journey to the capital. On receiving them, Chow Yuen inquired what the yellow piece was.

"That," replied the Emperor, smiling, "is what men call gold."

"In that case," said the youth, "your excellency had better take it back for your own use."

This proposal Ching Tĭh declined, saying that he had plenty more; on which Yuen made him a very profound reverence, and went in with all the money, which he delivered to his mother. The old lady then ventured out to exchange courtesies with her visitors, and the young man could not be restrained from running to the city to provide some savoury viands for an entertainment.

"But yesterday, and who so poor!
To-day, of rank and riches sure."

CHAP. XXXI.

> " 'Tis natural to man to scoff the poor;
> But I would ask, how long do riches last?
> Ceaselessly move the wheels of Providence;
> Now up, now down, is mortal's lot; — why then
> Cling fondly to the wish of getting rich?"

AFTER he had partaken of the early meal provided by Chow Yuen, Ching Tih was about to resume his route, when it occurred to him that when the young man repaired to the capital, his mother would be left without any companion, and that, therefore, it would be the best plan to make arrangements for marrying him forthwith, to prevent the old lady's being left solitary. Having determined on this, he requested Yuen to let him know whether among the wealthy and noble families of the city and neighbourhood there were any beautiful young ladies.

" There are many wealthy and noble

families in the city," replied the young man; "but of all the fair ladies whom my eyes have seen, there is not one to be compared to Miss Yŭh Ying, the daughter of Tsaou Kĕĕ, vice-president of the board of revenue. Her talents, moreover, are equal to her beauty,—gentle as the waves of autumn, and bright as the flowers of the plumb-tree,—one could gaze on her for ever without tiring."

"And is this lady betrothed or not?" inquired the Emperor.

"I have heard," said his son, "that her disposition is very different from that of other ladies. Her father has often wished to espouse her to some scion of one of the families in office, but when he has sent to find out her feelings she has always declined an engagement, saying, that whether the suitor belong to a rich family or a poor, she must first see him across a screen before she gave her consent. Her parents are devoted to her as a precious pearl, and so allowed her such an election; in consequence of which she continues still unengaged."

"How do you know this?" asked Ching Tĭh again.

"Last month," replied Yuen, "it rained for several days successively, so that I could not go up the hill to cut wood. At last our provisions became exhausted; and I was obliged, notwithstanding the rain, to cut a parcel of wet fuel, which I carried to her house to sell. When I was there the young lady happened to come out, and asked me where I lived. I told her, in reply, the hardships of my lot, and after listening to my account she looked at me attentively, and went in. In a little time, however, the old lady, her mother, ordered a maidservant, named Kin Kĕŭh, to bring out some white rice for me to carry home, as a supply for my mother and myself. She was also instructed to request me to persevere in my filial piety, for I would not be long doomed to occupy an inferior position in society. She told me also to bring all my wood there in future. In this way I obtained a sight of the young lady's beauty, and became somewhat acquainted with her affairs."

"And how would you like me to get this young lady for you to wife?" said his majesty.

The young man suddenly interrupted the other at this question. "Father," said he, "don't speak so absurdly. The disposition of the vice-president is very different from that of his daughter. There is not an inhabitant of the city or the suburbs who does not stand in dread of him; his servants moreover are very numerous, and there are frequent goers and comers about his house. Should he hear what you have just now said, he will say that I have insulted his daughter, and this poor hut will no longer be a safe and pleasant dwelling for me."

"Don't fear," returned Ching Tĭh with a smile. "I will just write a letter, which you can carry to him. When he finds my letter making arrangements about a marriage between his daughter and you, he will never think of not complying."

With these words he told Hwang Yin to furnish him with a pencil and ink. Yung instantly put the requisite articles

for writing on the table, and Ching Tĭh commenced preparing a letter. He was interrupted, however, by Yuen's mother. "You may write," said the old woman, "about other matters, but I beseech you on no account to write about the thing you have just mentioned. Not only will such a marriage not be effected, but the vice-president will be enraged, and say that I have insulted his family. We shall certainly suffer for it."

The Emperor gave no heed to her voice, but completed his letter, which he first carefully sealed, and after writing upon the back of it, "An embroidered elegant royal epistle," gave it to Yuen, saying, "To-morrow you must take this letter, and the round jewel which I gave you, and go to Tsaou Kĕĕ's. When you come to the door you must give the letter to somebody to carry in, and send a message also to the vice-president to open the middle door, and come out to receive you. You must then hang the jewel before your breast, and as soon as he perceives it he will kneel down to you. While you keep

the jewel with you you must take care not to return his reverences, and as soon as you return home give it to your mother to take care of till you come to the capital and present it to the guardian."

Chow Yuen promised compliance with these several injunctions, and the Emperor remained that day and the next night in the house. The morning after, he and Chow Yung wanted to leave early, but were detained by Yuen's earnest entreaties till after breakfast. Ching Tǐh repeated his orders to the young man again and again, and then took his leave, accompanied by the old lady and her son, who kept gazing after him as long as he continued in sight, and then returned to the house, and delighted themselves with gazing at their gold and silver.

"I do not know," observed Yuen, "whether my father was in earnest about this letter, and the orders he gave me in connection with it. If he was not, I very much fear this back of mine will be sadly beaten."

"Our guests," replied his mother, "were

not like unworthy individuals; and since the gentleman adopted you as his son, and gave you this gold and the jewel, it cannot be supposed that he is playing with you. We do not know what there may be in his letter; but he has now entrusted it to you, and if you do not carry it to the vice-president you may frustrate some important concern. I think you had better take it without fear."

With this she took out the jewel, and gave it to him, telling him to go at once, and be quick back, so that she might not be long kept in anxiety.

Yuen accordingly proceeded to the city, and in a short time reached the residence of Tsaou Kĕĕ. Summoning all his courage, he advanced, and said to the porter, "I will trouble you to give this letter to your master. Tell him also quickly to open the middle door, and come out to receive me."

The porter looked at the speaker, and perceiving who it was, he exclaimed, "Chow Yuen, Chow Yuen, how is it that you have not been here with wood to sell

for several days? I was thinking you were dead, but it seems you have been eating the kĕün, and have gone mad."

"Whether I be mad or not," said Yuen, with much nonchalance, "even I myself do not know. I only wish you to give your master this letter; when he sees it he will come out and meet me."

"Chow Yuen," replied the porter, with a laugh, "I think your back is itching. Are you bold enough to keep your ground, instead of running off?"

"A man of worth," returned the young man, "never thinks of running off;" and on hearing this reply, the porter took the letter and entered the great hall with it. As soon as he saw his master he knelt down, saying, "The lad Chow Yuen, the wood-cutter, has brought this letter, and orders you to open the middle door and come out to receive him." At this announcement Tsaou Kĕĕ flew into a passion. "Why did you not bring him in?" said he, furiously, to the porter.

The man replied, that he was still before the house waiting his proper re-

ception; on which the vice-president looked at the superscription of the letter. No sooner did he see the words, "Embroidered elegant royal epistle," than he knew it was an imperial decree, and continued dumb with terror for a while, unable to conjecture what could be the meaning of such a proceeding. Without stopping to read the letter, much against his inclination he ordered the door to be opened, and went out to meet Chow Yuen, not knowing what might be commanded him in the decree.

The sight of our friend inflamed his passion again, and made him resolve not to kneel to him; when suddenly the jewel which was suspended before the youth's breast caught his eye. Recognising it as the property of the Emperor, he was obliged to kneel, and perform the ceremonies of audience. After which he requested Yuen to enter the house.

By this time the young man could not conceive who his adopted father was, nor what the jewel could be, that it produced such an effect. With a bold step, how-

ever, he entered the hall, and proceeded to the highest seat, where he allowed Kėĕ to go through the same ceremonies again, without uttering a word.

Having finished these observances, the vice-president took the imperial letter and opened it.

> "The villain knew not whence the letter came,
> But trembling held possession of his frame."

CHAP. XXXII.

> "We wrongly rank the slave as mean;
> Her lowly virtue oft is seen
> Her mighty lord to ward.
> Intelligence and truth combined,
> Whether in master or in hind,
> Deserve our best regard."

At the conclusion of the last chapter we left Tsaou Këë in the act of opening the imperial decree, whose contents he found to be as follow: —

"The Emperor, by Heaven's appointment, continuing the circle of succession, intimates his decision.

"Some months ago, as I was asleep one night upon my dragon couch, the gods made known to me in a dream that I should visit Këäng Nan, in order to find a worthy servant who would prove a support to my empire. In consequence of this warning, I changed my dress, and have now travelled over several foo in the ap-

pointed province, without meeting with the object of my search; but yesterday, when after arriving at the borders of Sung Këang, I mistook my way, and wandered over several barren hills, not finding any lodging-house or any person to set me in the right path, I met with Chow Yuen, who received me into his house.

"I have observed, that though his mother is old and his family poor, he displays the utmost filial piety, and is, moreover, humble and respectful in his deportment towards strangers. My compassion, therefore, is excited towards him; and, according to a saying of the ancients, 'A loyal servant and a filial son cannot be long detained amid poverty and meanness.'

"I have heard that your daughter does not disregard the poor and the lowly;—has eyes speaking intelligence, and is endowed with high talents, but has not yet tied the silken knot, and waits for one to lead her to the nuptial couch. Now the youth whom I have mentioned is active and intelligent, and I act the part of go-between for him, and will do so, moreover, when a

fortunate time has been fixed for the union. Do you, therefore, as soon as possible, select the happy day, and do not frustrate my views because he is poor and undistinguished.

"When my decree reaches you respect it and obey."

When Tsaou Këë had read the decree through, he performed the ceremonies of audience again; and then, in great grief, he said to Chow Yuen, "And so his majesty mistook his way yesterday, and came to your house. Is he still there?"

"It was his majesty the present Emperor, then?" said Yuen, with joy. "He went away this morning after breakfast. What does he say in that letter?"

"The Emperor," said Këë, restraining his wrath, "acts as go-between, and espouses my daughter to you. Go into the library for a little, while I communicate the matter to my wife. You can then come out and consult with me."

Such was Yuen's joy at this announcement, that he clapped with his hands and stamped with his feet, as he complied with

the officer's request. As he was leaving the hall he was met by a maiden belonging to the young lady, named Tseu Kĕŭh, who was coming out on some business, and who no sooner saw the young man than she inquired whether he had brought any wood that day.

"From this day," said Yuen, laughing, "I shall cut no more wood; and you must not call me any more Chow Yuen, but young master."

When the maiden heard this she pointed her finger at Yuen, and mocked him. Seeing she did not believe him, therefore, the young man repeated to her the various circumstances which had befallen him; and when he had finished his recital, although Kĕŭh did not altogether believe it, she crept secretly to the hall, to listen whether it was true or not.

There she found it confirmed, but in a way which she did not anticipate. To explain this, we must observe that Tsaou Kĕĕ had a brother-in-law called Lin Kwăn, an uncommonly cunning, deceitful, crafty, and depraved fellow. This man was con-

tinually lying about Kèĕ's house, on whose support he relied to oppress the neighbours; and in such good-stead did it stand him that they nicknamed him, "The waiter for Heaven's summons."

When Chow Yuen brought his majesty's letter to the vice-president, Lin Kwăn was in the house, and, hearing some voices in the hall, came out to see what was the matter. He found, however, Kèĕ sitting by himself, with his whole countenance expressive of grief, and asking him why he looked so sorrowful, was made acquainted with all the preceding particulars.

"Does any plan occur to you," asked Kèĕ, as he concluded the narration, "by which we can injure the young man?"

Kwăn reflected for a time, and then exclaimed, "I have it; I have it. You must meet plan with plan by telling Yuen, as the fortunate day is not fixed, to go home, and bring his mother here, that they may pass the time in plenty and pleasure till the time is settled and the marriage completed. When they come here you can put them in a retired apartment, and

at the third watch of the night you can cause a man to set it on fire, and thus have them burned to death without any trouble. Should his majesty inquire into the event, you can say that they themselves set the place on fire by accident, and as there will be no proof to the contrary this plan seems exceedingly eligible."

Tsaou Kêĕ struck the table in admiration of the proceeding which his brother-in-law had sketched out. "It is a beautiful plan," said he; "and when it has been carried into effect I will certainly not forget you."

The two men having thus determined what they would do, Kêĕ, instead of going in and telling the Emperor's proposal to his wife and daughter, instantly called Chow Yuen, and spoke to him as the other had advised. Yuen was a simple and upright man, into whose mind it could never enter that this was a plan to injure himself. Believing that Kêĕ's intentions were as he represented, he saluted him in a state of the liveliest joy, and then flew home to acquaint his mother with his good fortune.

And when the several facts were comprehended by her, that their guest was no other than the Emperor, that he had adopted her son, that the vice-president had promised to marry his daughter to him, a young lady of whose worth and excellency she had long heard tell, and lastly, that she and her son were invited to live in the president's residence, the old lady felt that the happiness of her lot was as large as Heaven, and was as joyful as her son.

It will now be understood in what manner Tseu Këŭh received a confirmation of Yuen's statements. When she reached the hall she saw her master and his brother-in-law talking together, and concealing herself behind the door-screen, she listened to them in silence. In this way she overheard the whole of their plan, and stole quietly away, musing with herself. My mistress, thought she, has indeed a pair of intelligent eyes. She saw Chow Yuen but once, and then she praised him, saying, that though he was then in a low and mean condition, his filial piety, so

worthy of admiration, would insure his speedy rise; and now her words are plainly shown to be correct. But my master unrighteously wishes to injure the young man. If I don't save them, he and his mother will certainly die through his machinations; but if I do save them, should my interference in the matter be hereafter discovered, it will be difficult to preserve my own life.

In this way the maiden reflected, finding it difficult either to advance or recede. Suddenly it occurred to her that she had better communicate first the various circumstances to her mistress, and act according to the way in which she should receive the account. She went in accordingly to the young lady's chamber, and found her alone, employed in embroidering. Advancing close up to her, Kéŭh said with a low voice, "A wonderful thing has happened to day; have you heard of it?"

Yŭh Ying stopped her needle, and requested to be told what was the matter; on which Kéŭh informed her of what had befallen Chow Yuen, and his application

for her in marriage. The story brought the peach flowers into her face, and suffused her almond cheeks with a blush; but there came from her elegant throat, in slow and measured tones, the words, "Marriages happen according to the appointment of Heaven. Why do you say the thing is strange?"

Kéŭh embraced the opportunity to try her mistress's mind, and observed, "My master is noble, and you are both accomplished and beautiful. Is it not strange, then, that a mean and utterly uninstructed wood-cutter should be married to you?"

The young lady changed countenance, and replied in the language of reproof. "It is an old saying," said she, "'Inquire not into the origin of a hero.' And in the times of high antiquity worthy ministers and faithful state-servants often arose from among the low and the mean. Kéăng Kung, for instance, was met by the Emperor, and taken from the banks of the Wei: Han Sin was promoted from Chang Hwae; Mung Ching dwelt contented originally in a poor cottage; and Woo

Yuen was condemned at times to beg his bread. These all, you see, were originally poor and mean; and now, since the Emperor acts as go-between for Chow Yuen, who dare oppose his will? You shall be mercilessly punished if you broach such points again."

When the maiden thus understood her mistress's feelings she thought she might speak boldly, and accordingly she observed again: "Though you don't reject the young man, yet should your father not accede to a marriage with him, what then?"

"The Emperor," said Yŭh Ying, "by his decree acts as go-between; how should my father not accede?"

On this Kéŭh approached the edge of the gallery, and looked around in all directions. Seeing that nobody was near, she again advanced to her mistress, and said, "Just in consequence of the imperial decree, the lives of Chow Yuen and his mother will instantly be in peril."

As soon as the young lady heard these words, her father's disposition and tendency

to contemn the poor occurred to her mind. She threw away her needle, and inquired, "Is it not that my father intends to disobey the decree, and involve himself in a crime which will lead to the extermination of his family."

> "The maiden's words sound in her mistress' ears,
> Loud as a sudden startling thunder crash."

CHAP. XXXIII.

"The righteous damsel now unfolds her plans,
And, for her mistress' favours, kind conducts
Her perilous prospects to a happy end.
Chow Yuen, too, and his mother, warning get
By sudden flight to 'scape the crafty toils."

In reply to the question with which our last chapter concluded, Tseu Keŭh informed her mistress of the plan which Lin Kwăn had devised, and how she had overheard it. Yŭh Ying was alarmed by the account, and exclaimed, "This is not a little matter; for should it ever be known that my father has perpetrated such wickedness, the lives of all our house must be lost. I must save Chow Yuen and his mother, for what wrong have they done to us that I should calmly sit and witness their death, without trying to deliver them. But then if I truly inform Yuen of my reasons, and tell him to fly for his life, this

will be to publish my father's crime ; and should Yuen hereafter, on seeing the Emperor, present a memorial of his guilt, the Emperor will be enraged at my father ; and should he be punished, a charge of unfilialness, deep as the gulf, will lie against me. I can neither advance nor recede, and am placed, indeed, in an absolute dilemma."

Having thus soliloquised on her condition, she said to Kèŭh, " My worthy sister, from my youth we have been together, and become as closely attached to each other, as if we were children of the same parents. I cannot speak on this matter to my father and mother ; and my father, moreover, is a man who can't bear to be crossed ; what plan can you suggest at once to save the lives of the intended victims, and to preserve my father from the crime of deceiving the Emperor. If you can accomplish these objects, I will myself largely repay your kindness, which indeed must ever remain impressed upon my memory."

The maiden, thus applied to, reflected

in silence for a time. She then nodded her head, and said, " There are three things to be done; to save Chow Yuen and his mother; to preserve alive you and all your family; and not let the marriage with the youth slip. There is only one plan which can secure these three objects. I must go and speak to Chow Yuen as if I were carrying a message from you; thus imitating the premier of Shŭh, who transferred the calamities threatening that kingdom to Woo."

" How will you thus remove the dangers?" inquired Yŭh Ying, hastily. " Explain to me fully."

" If you will act according to my plan," said Kĕŭh, " you will give me a hundred taels of silver, and a keepsake, to carry to Chow Yuen. I will go to his house, and say, that before the arrival of the imperial decree my master had promised you in marriage to the son of Squire Tang Sze Seang, who had indeed chosen a fortunate day to offer the presents of espousal. That, however, on seeing his majesty's decree, your father excused himself on the ground,

that these presents had not yet arrived, and after betrothing his daughter to him, sent to Sze Seang to break off the engagement. I will add, that Sze Seang is so much enraged, that he accuses Yuen of preventing the marriage of his son, and declares that he will not rest until he has found out and put to death both him and his mother. In consequence of this, you and your parents can get no rest, sleeping or sitting, not knowing but that he may really intend doing so, and that Yuen and his mother, being unprepared, may meet with some injury at his poisonous hands. I will then say that you sent me with a hundred taels and a keepsake, to come privately and put them on their guard; and advise them not to come at present to your house, lest they should be intercepted and slain by ruffians on the way, and also to leave their own house, and go together to the capital to his majesty. Yuen can then obtain a decree, and return here to take you for his bride, when nobody will dare to lift a hand in opposition to him. I will say in conclusion, that you earnestly

intreat them to be careful on their journey, and to excuse you for not accompanying them on their way.

"By this scheme not only will the lives of Chow Yuen and his mother be saved, but the evil impending over your whole family will be averted. And, moreover, should Yuen obtain a high office and come back with an imperial order, there is no fear that your father will not give his consent. Then you will become Yuen's wife, and explain to him, at your convenience, the story about Tang Sze Seang, and transferring the evil to Woo. Thus every point is gained. What think you of my plan?"

Yŭh Ying clapped her hands in admiration. "Chang Leang, though he were to come into the world again, could not come up to it." The two then talked over these circumstances until it was dark; and next day Yung having called Keŭh, went into her chamber, and brought out a hundred taels of silver, and two fishes made of precious stones, one of which she wished to give to Yuen for a keepsake, that the

couple might be united again by their own meeting. She then gave these to the maiden, and charged her again to be very careful not to let their movements drop out, and to return very quickly to relieve her anxiety.

Kĕŭh received her orders, and departed, leaving the house privately, and taking her way directly towards Yuen's. In the course of an hour she reached the cottage, the door of which she at once pushed open, and entered. She found its two inmates hurriedly bundling up their various articles, in order to remove to the vice-president's, and was recognized by Yuen as soon as the sound of her footsteps caused him to lift up his eyes. Supposing that she was sent by his father-in-law to attend them to the house, he hastily put a question to that effect, and handed her a chair.

The maiden sat down, and seeing that both the mother and the son were still as if in a dream, wished to make some remarks that would afford herself amusement. Reflecting, however, that it was a long way back to the city, and that her mistress

would be anxious, she repeated the story which she had concocted the day before. The two innocent listeners heard her with amazement and terror. Having long known that Yang Sze Seang was a furious and bad man, they never doubted the truth of the story, and Yuen observed, that having experienced so much kindness from the young lady and her parents, he ought at once to comply with her request.

Kéŭh then said, "When I was about to leave, my young lady, fearing that you and your mother might not have sufficient to bear the expenses of such a long journey as that to the capital, gave me a hundred taels, telling me to deliver them to you, to assist in supplying your wants on the way. She has also sent you a fish, made of a precious stone, to serve as a keepsake, and to remind you of the day when it shall meet its fellow, and you two find yourselves together with the flowery candles in the retired apartment. Moreover, she requests you to begin your march to-morrow, and stay no longer here. She trusts you will be careful on the way,

and excuse her not following and attending you." With these words she drew out from her side the money and the fish, and gave them to the young man, saying, at the same time, that it was a long way back to the city, and that she could not stay longer, lest her mistress should be anxious. She was therefore about to take her leave, when Yeun received the money and the fish from her hands. The latter he hung about his neck, and then said to her, "I will trouble you to carry back word to your mistress and her parents, that their kindness is deeply engraven in our hearts. When we meet again I will endeavour to recompense it; in the mean time we will commence our journey to-morrow, and hope they will excuse my not repairing to the hall to bid them farewell."

The maiden then left the cottage and returned to her mistress, whom she acquainted with all that had taken place. The lady was somewhat composed by the narrative, and from that time kept closely

to her chamber, waiting for good news from her lover.

After Kĕŭh had gone away Chow Yuen and his mother talked about commencing their journey next day, penetrated with a lively sense of gratitude to the family of Tsaou Kĕĕ. "Mother," said the youth, "it is impossible at your age that you should travel to the capital, considering especially that the road is hilly and difficult. It will be the best plan for us to go to-morrow to my uncle Hwang Ching Chaou's in Hang Chow, and you can remain in his family for some time, while I go alone to the capital, to see my adopting father, and determine what is to be done, and I will then come back and receive you."

The old lady perceived the reasonableness of this proposal, and assented to it at once. Accordingly, they dressed themselves early next morning, and after breakfast, took the money and all their necessaries in a bundle, and leaving the door unlocked, took the way directly for Hang Chow. In a few days they reached

Chaou's house, and great was the joy of the sisters, and of the uncle and nephew, at meeting together. After some time, Chaou inquired the reason of their coming; and as Yuen knew him to be an upright man he related to him one by one the whole of the preceding events, and then left a hundred taels in his hands to assist him in bearing their expenses.

After a few days, Yuen wished to set out on his journey, and reported his intention to his mother. The old lady told him to save her from anxiety by being careful of himself upon the way, and he, having promised to attend to her admonitions, next day took the gold and the jewel which he had received from the Emperor, and after bidding his uncle and aunt good-bye, and requesting them to be kindly attentive to his mother during his journey, he betook himself to the way, and proceeded towards the capital.

> "Each for himself takes thought, nor cares
> If well or ill his neighbour fares."

CHAP. XXXIV.

> " The crafty tread a dangerous path
> To work on men their spiteful ill;
> But heavenly justice, strict in wrath,
> Works on themselves its holy will.
> Keĕ and Lin Kwăn prove this truth
> While watching for their victim's blood;
> Just Heaven, in pity to the youth,
> Consumed them with a fiery flood."

WE shall now leave Chow Yuen for a while, and turn ourselves to the fortunes of his enemies. That villanous officer, Tsaou Keĕ, after concerting the scheme which we have related along with his brother-in-law Lin Kwăn, waited anxiously for the arrival of Chow Yuen and his mother, that he might put it in execution. When half a month passed, however, without their making their appearance, he began to be harassed with doubts, and told a servant to call Lin Kwăn to come

and consult with him. That villain instantly sent a man to see what Yuen was doing, under pretence of inviting him to come and live with the president. The messenger went, but came back in a short time with the news that no trace of inhabitants was to be found in the house, and that, indeed, there was nothing left in it but a few broken articles of furniture. The two men were exceedingly alarmed at this intelligence, and Këĕ observed that the young man and his mother must have learned their plan, and in consequence fled for their lives.

"How could they have been informed of it?" replied the other; "and Yuen is not a quick-witted man, to suspect such a contrivance. Probably somebody invited him to come and do work, and he, being a dutiful and obedient son, took his mother along with him. Be that as it may, when he comes here to demand his bride, you can select a clever maiden from your household, and pass her off to him for your daughter, and then marry my niece into some high family. I do not suppose that

this villager will put himself in opposition to us."

Kèĕ was pleased with this new suggestion, and took the nativities of the various individuals who had formerly sought a union with Yŭh Ying, and examined them afresh. Among them all the nativity of the son of Tang Sze Seang appeared most eligible; and as his father was possessed of power and influence, and of equal rank with himself, Kèĕ employed Kwăn to go and speak about a match, charging him to tell Sze Seang, in case he should assent, to choose a day forthwith to complete the marriage.

Lin Kwăn accordingly repaired to Sze Seang's on the business, in which he was immediately successful; for Seang, having heard of Yŭh Ying's beauty and virtue, and seeing that she was in point of fortune an equal match for his son, gave his consent at once, and even selected a day for bringing the lady home, and gave it to Kwăn to carry back.

When Kèĕ received the information of Seang's consent, and also the paper an-

nouncing the day he had selected, he felt exceedingly glad, and went in to communicate the tidings to his wife. It so happened that Tseu Kĕŭh was in attendance upon the old lady at the time, and so heard the intelligence; the harmony of which with part of her own plan put her soul and spirit both to flight. She was frightened moreover, and lost no time in telling her young mistress the whole transaction. Yŭh Ying's countenance became like the colour of earth at the news, and she fell down in her chamber in a swoon. Kĕŭh, however, succeeded in restoring her by means of ginger soup, and in a little she rose up, exclaiming, with a sigh, "It now only remains for me to die."

The maiden tried to comfort her in a hundred ways, but all in vain; Ying continued to weep bitterly. At last Kĕŭh said to her, "You must not go on in this way, for should your father see you, and inquire into the cause of your grief, what shall I be able to say to him? We have still fifteen days before the day of marriage, and had we not better endeavour to devise

some other plan by which you may escape from your prison-cage."

On this the young lady was obliged to restrain her grief for a little; but quickly the time passed by, and the happy day drew near. She then became more miserable; when suddenly there occurred a scheme to Tseu Kĕŭh, which she communicated to her mistress at night. "If you wish to escape from the danger," said she, "that threatens you, you must go to some other place for a time, and remain concealed, till Chow Yuen returns. As soon as that takes place, I will privately inform him where you are, so that he can go and receive you. In this way you shall escape all evil."

"Such a plan might do," replied the lady, "but I am a weak woman, and can hardly walk. Moreover I don't know where to go to; and should my father catch me, and bring me back again, I should be in a bad plight."

"Let me," said Tseu Kĕŭh again, "go to-morrow, and steal a suit of my master's clothes. You can change your own dress,

and go disguised in these to Fei Chow, and take shelter in the monastery which is ruled by your aunt."

Yŭh Ying reflected, but could herself think of no plan. She was constrained, therefore, to accede to the above proposal, and secured some money, and the remaining fish, about her person, to be in readiness for her flight. She remained, however, two days more, when the appointed day was close at hand. On this, Kéŭh stole a suit of her master's clothes, and the same night urged Ying to dress herself in them, and make her escape, by the aid of the moon, which was shining brightly. The chief difficulty was experienced with the boots, which were too large for the young lady's small feet, so that she could not walk with them. Kéŭh, however, filled them up with cotton, and about the third watch opened the back-door for her to flee. When her mistress had gone, the maiden returned to her chamber without shutting the door.

When it was morning, all the house got up, and Kéŭh heard a boy reporting that

the back-door had been opened by somebody. Making herself as ignorant as the rest, she carried water up stairs, and pretended to call her mistress to rise and dress. After calling several times, she ran hurriedly down stairs, and reported the circumstance to Këĕ and his wife, who were thrown into great consternation, and ran up to see. Their daughter had indeed disappeared; and when they questioned all the maid-servants about what she had talked to them lately, and whether they knew if she was dead, or had gone somewhere else, they could not get the slightest information. On this, Tsaou Këĕ sent men to search for her in every direction, but they returned without success.

Her mother kept weeping the whole day, and repining against her husband for urging her daughter to death. Every day she went along with Tseu Këŭh to the various abbeys and convents of note, praying to the gods, and asking the diviners, if peradventure she might find her daughter; for such are the feelings and conduct of parents.

Among the members of Kèĕ's household there was one man-servant called Gae Tung. After the departure of the young lady, as Kèŭh and her mistress were continually frequenting various monasteries, abbeys, and convents, and repairing to the temples to burn incense, they often continued absent all night. The vice-president himself, in order to drown his trouble, kept continually drinking wine with Lin Kwăn in the back-hall. In this way the womens' chambers were left without any superintendence, so that Gae Tung, and a maid-servant called Tung Mei, had the range of them every day, laughing and amusing themselves together. One day, at the first watch, while they were together, they were overheard by another maid-servant, named Hea Lan, who approached to see what was the matter. As soon as she observed them, she wanted to return, but was pursued by Gae Tung, who overtook and wanted to detain her. Lan, however, cried out, and was going to her master to complain of the youth, when Gae saw that he was in the condition of one who is riding on a tiger's

back, but finds it difficult to get off. Excited and frightened, he drew a sword which was hanging before a curtain, and murdered Hea Lan in the midst of the gallery. His companion, Tung Mei, became so frightened, that her hands shook, and her limbs could hardly sustain her. "You have killed her," said she, "and when our master knows it we shall both be put to death."

"We had better run off," said Gae Tung.

"Where can we go to," observed the girl, "without a single cash. When our master knows of our flight, moreover, he will offer a large reward for our apprehension, so that we shall not escape being taken and put to death."

On this Gae Tung contracted his eyebrows for a time, and no plan occurred to him. "Let you and I," said he, "take advantage of all being asleep, and at midnight go and steal some gold and silver, and precious articles, and then let us firmly lock the door of the after-hall, and set the house on fire. Though our master and

Lin Kwăn be burned to death, nobody will know it, and we shall be safe from punishment from them, and the others will run off as well as we."

Tung Mei praised the plan, as being exceedingly ingenious; and they both went down stairs to the old lady's room, and stole a quantity of gold, silver, and jewels. This they were easily able to effect, because Mei had been entrusted with the key, and the charge of all the articles in the room, when her mistress went out. When they came out again, they set open all the other doors, excepting that of the after-hall, which they locked; and then, having collected a large quantity of inflammable articles in the middle-hall, they set them on fire, and made their own escape by the door behind.

In an instant the fire began to rage with great violence, and involved the after-hall and the galleries above it in complete destruction, the flames towering towards Heaven. A number of thieves were attracted by the fire to come and plunder; and at the same time all the servants

caught alarm, and fled for their lives to their own homes. Alas! Tsaou Kēĕ and Lin Kwăn died through the hand of a maiden and a slave; and in the morning all the porches, terraces, and galleries were converted into a heap of ruins. Tseu Kēŭh and her mistress, however, had not returned from a visit to a monastery; and thus Heaven saved their lives in recompense of the righteousness of the maiden.

> "The well-doer's end is crowned with good:
> But evil tracks the wicked brood."

CHAP. XXXV.

> " To trouble mortal man is born ;
> Yet we may surely ask its cause,
> For seldom by the gods forlorn
> Is he who treads in virtue's laws.
> The bad and crafty meet their fate,
> And vainly evil try to shun.
> Let him who suffers fortune's hate
> Revolve the course which he has run."

The day after this awful catastrophe, while Yŭh Ying's mother and the maiden Tseu Kèŭh continued in the monastery of Tsze Yun, an old domestic came to bring them the news. He informed the lady that her husband and brother, and all the servants, had been consumed together, by fire from Heaven, at the third watch of the night; that the house, and all the gold and silver in it, had been entirely destroyed; and that he himself had only been able to save his life through his sleeping by the outer gate.

The lady fainted away as if dead on hearing the disastrous intelligence, but through the efforts of the nuns she recovered again in a short time. With returning consciousness, however, her sorrow also returned. "I know not," cried she, "whether my daughter be dead or alive. And now my husband and my brother have perished amid the flames, and I am left alone without a roof to shield me. I also will die."

With these words she was about to dash her head against some steps, when the nuns and Tseu Këŭh restrained her, and tried to comfort her, saying, "Lady, you are here in our monastery, seeking for news about your daughter, and it may be that you shall yet meet her. And though you should die, you cannot bring back those whom you have lost."

The widow suffered herself to be dissuaded from her purpose, and erected a place for the spirit of her husband in the monastery, and remained there mourning for his death, and searching for traces of Yŭh Ying. She also sent the domestic

who had brought her news of the calamity to carry the same to her sister-in-law. As she was giving the man a message to that effect, Kĕŭh suggested that she had better tell him also to inform Tang Sze Seang that the young lady, with her father and uncle, had all perished in the fire, that Ying might be saved from future annoyance. This the lady did, and Sze Seang's emotion at the news was extreme.

In the mean time, during the misfortunes of her family, Yŭh Ying was also called to undergo severe suffering. After her flight from the house she made her way with much difficulty through the wind and rain as far as Hang Chow. There she was overtaken with sickness in the lodging-house of one Sung. Her disease lingered about her for some months, until at last not only was all the money which she had brought with her expended, but she had even run into debt with her host. Upon this, the man, seeing that she was a solitary stranger from a distance, became afraid that she would die in his house. Amazed at the same time at her continual state of

melancholy, and unable to account for it, without considering whether she was good or bad, he turned her out.

Oppressed with grief, without a place in which to rest her body, and ignorant of the distance to Hwing Chow, without a single cash, moreover, to carry her on her way, and suffering from the remains of her sickness, Yŭh Ying felt that sorrow was accumulating upon sorrow. As she travelled along, she attempted to devise some plan of action, but in vain. The day began to close, and her consternation increased with the darkness, till at last, after long and fruitless thought, she determined to throw away her fading breath to show her faithfulness to Chow Yuen. With this she drew near to the banks of a neighbouring river, and after performing the ceremony of worship to her parents, and weeping bitterly for a time, she threw herself into the water.

It happened strangely that Chow Yuen's uncle, Ching Chaou, who was a fisherman, was engaged at his calling that night near the very spot. Thinking that he heard

some restrained sounds, like the voice of a person in sorrow, upon the bank, he was about to turn his boat in that direction, and see what it was, when suddenly the noise approached close to his side. Looking round him carefully, he saw that it was a young man who had attempted to drown himself; and having drawn him out of the water, he carried him on his back to his own house, and told the different members of his family to try and recover the stranger.

In a quarter of an hour Ying began slowly to revive, and Chow Yuen's mother, observing that the young man's clothes were all soiled with mud, brought some dry garments for him to change, and then observed that before his breast there hung a fish, made of a precious stone, the exact fellow of that which was in the possession of her son. This circumstance aroused her suspicions, and as soon as Ying was fully conscious, she began to interrogate her very particularly. The young lady could not reply to her questions, but related to them truly the foregoing events,

only concealing her father's opposition to the imperial decree.

When she had finished her story the old woman exclaimed with joy, "It is truly the wonderful and kind arrangement of Heaven which has brought us together." And with this she informed Ying who she was, and how she had come there. A blush of shame covered the young lady's face at the intelligence. Ching Chaou and his wife were also struck with wonder, and entreated Ying to accept of their mean and small accommodations until Chow Yuen should return from the capital,—a proposal which the lady felt herself constrained to accept. And here we must leave her in peace for a time, while we return to pursue the rambles of the Emperor.

His majesty and Chow Yung, after leaving Chow Yuen's, proceeded on their way. When they came to hills they bestrode their horses; when they came to rivers they called for a boat. Seeing, in the villages through which they passed, many tokens of fair ladies, the Emperor remembered that his real and original object in

visiting Kèang Nan was to find out some ladies of surpassing beauty whom he might carry back to adorn the palace. He knew not how the intention had up to this time slipped from his mind; but he determined, during the remainder of his rambles, to have his eyes about him.

As they rode hastily on, they suddenly came in sight of a lofty hill in front, whose sides were thickly lined with trees, presenting a dangerous and wild aspect.

"This place," said the Emperor to his companion, "is not far from your native village. Do you know if there be any antiquities on the hill before us?"

"This hill," replied Yung, "is called Peach-flower Hill, and a little way on is the market village of Nan Laon, a place of much stir and bustle. When I was a boy I used to hear the people saying that on this hill there was a band of robbers, whose conduct was very extraordinary. They did not plunder any of the neighbouring villages, nor injure an inch of grass belonging to the people; merchants, moreover, met with no interruption in going and coming;

but some of the principal men of the band were despatched through the various districts to procure intelligence about any bribe-taking magistrate or impure officer who might be going to the capital, or retiring with his gains to his native place; and whenever such an event took place, the individual was sure to be set upon by the whole band and plundered.

"If any of the numerous travellers on this highway was robbed here by stranger-thieves, he had only to ascend the hill and inform the chief, who would instantly refund to him all his losses, and then go and find out the intrusive robbers, and attack them in order to recover the stolen property; nor would he rest contented until he had killed them. In consequence of this the whole neighbourhood lived in peace and security; and whenever any of the inhabitants met with opposition from the bold and strong, they went up the hill, and on lodging a complaint with the chief, he was sure to redress their wrongs. Some even of the village farmers paid him so much every year to maintain a guard of

his band over their property, like so many warders; and in fact, after it was known that he had undertaken such a charge, no man ventured to commit the slightest depredation, so that his revenue was very large, and his band were never straitened for provisions. Several of the magistrates, both civil and military, observing the peculiarity of his proceedings, frequently sent messengers, advising him to abandon his lawless course. He always replied, however, that he had been warned by a genius to persevere in his way of living until a bamboo flowered in front of the hill. But it is a long time since I heard these things, and I do not know whether the band is in existence now, or not."

"Such a man," exclaimed Ching Tĭh, with a loud voice, "is much to be preferred to all those magistrates and officers."

The sound of his words suddenly aroused a company of robbers; and the travellers heard a loud voice among the trees, crying out, "Come quickly, chief, here are the two men." And at the same instant a sig-

nal gun was discharged, and a great number of thieves were seen rushing down the hill.

The Emperor became alarmed, and lost his colour; but Chow Yung said to him, "You had better ride straight forward to the village of Nan Laon, and halt at the first lodging-house you come to, and remain there till I rejoin you, when we can resume our route. In the mean time I will see what these gentlemen want to do."

The Emperor, on this, applied the whip to his horse, and rode forward as fast as he could, while Yung took his two rods of steel from his back, and grasping them in his hands, stood prepared in the middle of the road for an encounter with the thieves. These came on with a leader at their head, armed with a silver helmet, with a pheasant's feather stuck in it, and plates of steel over a dress of white silk. In his hand he bore a snow-white silver spear, and the horse on which he rode was as white as the blossoms of the plumb-tree. His cheeks were white, and his lips red, — his whole appearance, indeed, seemed to belie his profession. And behind followed two ladies, seemingly about

eighteen years of age, armed cap-a-pie, and of a beauty which might well overturn a kingdom. Chow Yung was struck with admiration in his heart; and as soon as the three came near, they sprang together from their horses, and the chief, advancing forward, saluted him, saying, "May I ask if you are general Chow Yung?"

A thousand doubts crowded on the traveller at this question, but he returned the salutation of the other, and replied, "I am; but how do you know me?" "This is not the place for conversation," replied the other; "let us ascend my poor hill, and there discourse." With this he called his band to lead the way; and Chow Yung, though he would rather have pursued his journey, in order to overtake the Emperor, instead of wasting his time by ascending the hill, found it difficult to refuse acceding to the proposal. He wished, indeed, to come to an understanding with the stranger at once, but being afraid that the true character of himself and his companion might drop out, he thought it well to ascend the hill for a little, and see the move-

ments of the robber. There was something, too, so surprising about the man, that he thought if he could only get him to return to his duty as a loyal servant, his majesty's expedition would not be in vain. By the time all these thoughts had passed through the general's mind, they had reached the rendezvous of the thieves, and the chief and the two ladies besought him to enter their dwelling. Yung complied, and having taken the stranger's seat, and after some of the band had presented tea, the young chief observed, " I did not expect that your excellency would have arrived so soon, and so failed in respect in not meeting you at a distance. I pray you to pardon me."

" You flatter me," replied Yung. " Allow me to ask your surname and name, and where we met before, that you know me. Let me intreat a particular reply, to satisfy my doubts."

" My surname," said the young man, " is Kwô, and my title Joo Lung. My grandfather filled the post of vice-president of the board of war, but having been often

drawn into quarrels with the crafty servants about the court, his whole family was nearly being cut off. He made his escape, however, to this high hill, and played the part of a robber. It is not, indeed, without feelings of shame that I detail our history; nor must you judge me by the fact, that I still continue here, though the neighbouring officers have often advised me to abandon this lawless course, for my father told me that a genius had warned him that we should remain here till a bamboo flowered on the hill in front of us. Last year, alas! my father died, leaving me and my two sisters there, Kwei Seen and Kwei Yung, both in their eighteenth year, and still unengaged. We have employed ourselves here in gathering around us a number of men of spirit from various quarters, in order to deliver the people from their sorrows. To-day a bamboo has really flowered, and last night I was divinely told in a dream that three quarters after midday the Emperor and an attendant-general, Chow Yung, would pass in front of the hill, and that I should go down and receive

you; that I should moreover return to my allegiance, and assist you in supporting the empire. Thus I knew of your arrival; and I would ask you where his majesty is. Was not that gentleman he who rode on before you?"

> "He often wished to leave his sylvan home,
> But still the proper hour delayed to come."

CHAP. XXXVI.

> "Heroes observe not all the self-same rule,
> Yet all are followers of the ancient school.
> A robber was Joo Lung, — to help the poor
> He robbed the rich, and struck the evil-doer;
> Great virtues wrought, redress'd the people's ill,
> And stood prepar'd to hear the dragon's will."

WHEN Choo Yung had heard Joo Lung's account of himself, he reflected on the harmony and truth of all its parts. It was impossible that the robber could have known any thing about him and the Emperor, if a genius had not really been employed in bringing them together; and the circumstance filled Yung with surprise and admiration. While he was engaged in deep thought about the adventure, he suddenly lifted up his eyes, and beheld several regulations posted upon the wall. Going up to them in an easy manner he read them carefully over, and found that they were to the following effect.

1. No member shall, of his own accord, descend the hill to plunder any of the villages or farms, on pain of receiving forty blows of a large pole.

2. No member shall, on his own motion, take any of the people's labouring buffaloes, dogs, sheep, pigs, or horses, or slaughter them for his own use, on pain of the same penalty.

3. No member shall injure any trees or tombs belonging to the people, on pain of being beaten with thirty strokes of a large pole.

4. No member shall go to the villages to disturb the inhabitants, or to behave improperly towards their wives and daughters, on pain of being beheaded.

5. No member shall plunder any travelling merchant, or rob the people of their fruits, on pain of receiving forty strokes of a large pole.

6. No member shall be extortionate in demanding payment from individuals whose lands are guarded, but the amount of money or contributions in kind is to be left entirely to the goodwill of the individuals themselves.

When he had read these regulations, Yung felt assured that the individual before him was quite different from the common run of robbers, and therefore, without any hesitation, related to him at length the cause and character of the Emperor's rambles. On his part Lung represented his desire to abandon his present way of living, and entreated the other to make application to his majesty in his behalf. To this Yung readily assented, assuring his friend that he doubted not he would be completely successful, and that, when his majesty returned to the capital, they should attend him together.

When he had thus spoken, the general wished to take his leave, but Joo Lung was not willing to let him go so soon. "It is not evening," said he. "Remain here with us to-night, and you can go forward to-morrow. I have got some wine prepared, over which we can converse together." With these words he summoned some of his people to lay out a feast, and that done, they commenced drinking cheerily.

While Chow Yung was thus enjoying himself, the Emperor had met with entertainment of a different character. After parting from the general, he rode onwards to the village of Nan Laon, and was looking out for a lodging house, when a sign board met his eye, with the words "Dragon and Fung Inn" written upon it. Surprised at such an inscription, and thinking there must be some reason for it, he determined to go forward and find it out. Dismounting accordingly from his horse, he entered the inn on foot, and seeing the public hall with plenty of tables in it, but not a single person present, he called out several times for the landlord. No answer being given to his summons, he sat down upon a chair and beat the table violently with his fan, calling likewise with a loud voice.

This noise alarmed the sister of the landlord, named Le Fung, and brought her out. Lifting up the screen, to see what was the matter, and observing a gentleman, seemingly a scholar, sitting in the hall, and knocking and crying out in such a style,

she said to him, "Stranger, you are very unceremonious. How is it that you come into our house, and cry out in such a manner; are you mad?"

Ching Tĭh, amid all the noise which he was making, was startled by the sound of a bird-like voice behind him, and turning round saw behind the screen a young lady of eighteen, blooming as a flower, and fair as the moon, with a body pure as a pearl, and cheeks as clear as ice. He was thrown into no little confusion and excitement, but advanced forward instantly and bowed to her, saying, "Damsel, be not offended. I have been in the inn for a considerable time, and nobody responding to my calls, I was obliged to beat the table in the way which has brought you out. If you have any wine or vegetables, bring them out quickly, that I may enjoy myself."

"We have no wine or food at present ready," replied Le Fung, "but if you will favour me with the money, and tell me what you want, I will instantly go and have them prepared."

"I observe that you are alone in the

house, and how can these taper fingers, like the young and pearly shoots of the bamboo, be fit for such work? Had I not better go in and assist you?"

"Stranger, produce your purse, and though you want a fresh fish from the sea, I can get it for you without much trouble. If you have any money, produce it quickly."

At this request the Emperor drew out a piece of silver, and presented it to Le Fung. She requested him, however, to lay it on the table, saying, that young men and young women could not take and give at each others' hands. Ching Tĭh complied, with a smile, and put the money on a table, when Le Fung approached and took it up, telling her guest at the same time to wait a little, and take some tea, till she came back with the vegetables.

Accordingly she went in and sent a servant to purchase the necessary articles, which were brought in a short time, and when they were cooked, Fung sent the same individual with them into the hall.

While his majesty was about his solitary

meal, he began to be very melancholy on account of Chow Yung's protracted absence, as he did not know what might have befallen him. He was anxious, too, to ascertain the meaning of the sign-board, and to while away an hour by talking and laughing with Le Fung. The damsel, however, did not come out, and he therefore beat upon the table again with his fan, till she was alarmed, and made her appearance to inquire what he wanted to take.

"I don't want anything," replied Ching Tĭh; "but I find my wine tasteless, drinking it here alone, and intreat you to come and partake of it with me."

At these words Le Fung hid her blushing countenance with her sleeve, and replied, in a low and reproachful voice, "Stranger, that speech is very rude. I am not a person of improper character, and you must not talk to me in such a style. If I did not regard your character as a scholar, but were to inform my brother of your conduct, I fear you would find yourself in trouble."

"Since you keep an inn," replied the Emperor, "it is only right that you should receive your guests and sit by them; and what harm would there be in your now drinking two or three glasses with me? But tell me, what is your brother's ability, and on what account I should get into trouble."

"My brother," returned the damsel, "has not great ability, but he is skilled in all martial exercises, and is fond of connecting himself with all the gallant spirits of the empire. He is of a determined upright disposition, taking vengeance upon the unjust. He is now out hunting, but should he return, and I inform him that you have been talking to me in an insulting manner, he would bind you, and carry you before the magistrates *to the court*. I fear you would then find yourself somewhat in trouble."

When she had finished her speech, Ching Tĭh clapped his hands, and burst into a loud laugh. "I was thinking," said he, "what sort of trouble you could be meaning, and, lo! here it is. But I apprehend

the magistrates, when they saw me, would be wishing to kneel down to me."

"The magistrates, you say, would kneel to you," replied Le Fung; "you may alarm others by such a speech, but I am not to be alarmed by it. If you were the Emperor, perhaps, they might kneel down; but if you be not he, though you were a member of the royal family, you would not find innocent people readily kneeling down to you."

"The members of the royal family," said the traveller, "must all listen to my orders."

Le Fung reflected a little, and then said, "Your speech has an air of truth. Are you not really the Emperor?"

"Since you know that I am the Emperor, why do you not kneel down?"

"Who would kneel down to you without sufficient proof?"

Ching Tĭh smiled at her reply, and then surveyed her attentively. Perceiving that her speech was quick and lively, her movements elegant, her deportment insinuating enough to drown a fish or to bring down a

Gan, and her beauty sufficient to make the moon hide herself and flowers blush, he reflected with himself, that among all the ladies whom he had seen since he left the capital, he had not met with one of such beauty and elegance; and he determined therefore to make himself known to her, to make her mistress of one of his palaces, and to carry her back with him to the court. He therefore said to her, "If you want to have proof, advance and look here."

With these words, he took out what seemed a beautiful gem, and called Le Fung to examine it. The damsel took it in her hands, and recognized it to be the imperial seal. The words, 'Received commission from Heaven, and destined to everlasting vigour,' were engraved upon it, and Fung, understanding that such an article could only belong to the Emperor, approached and eagerly knelt down, saying, "I have eyes without eyeballs. Forgive my sin."

She then arose, and Ching Tĭh asked her whether she had been betrothed or not. With a downcast countenance, she replied in

the negative, saying, that her family was too poor. The announcement, however, delighted the Emperor. "Are you willing," said he, "that I now appoint you to be the mistress of the western palace?" Le Fung knelt down again in haste, to thank him for the favour, but he raised her up and requested her to be seated. She then returned him the seal, and he began to inquire her name, and also the surname and name of her brother. He also requested her to explain to him how they had come to put forth such a sign-board.

"I belong to this place," answered Le Fung, "for it is now more than twenty years since my father, Le Kwei, opened this inn. His only children were my brother and I, whom he named respectively Le Lung and Le Fung. He used to say that when we were born, a beam of light suddenly shone and as suddenly disappeared; but surprised at the circumstance, he changed the sign of the inn, and called it after our names, 'the Lung and Fung' inn. Travellers afterwards spread the news of what he had done, and his trade became

more flourishing. Unfortunately for us, my father and mother died some years ago, one after another, leaving us two, brother and sister, who attempt to keep in the paths of our parent. The care of the inn, however, is left altogether to my brother's wife, so that it is not necessary for me to show my face and exhibit my head, like Wăn-Keun, who sold wine before the furnace.

"My brother is devotedly attached to hunting, on which he will sometimes be absent for several days, leaving only his wife and me in the house. Hearing your voice calling, I came out suddenly and unpreparedly to receive you, and in ignorance that your imperial brightness had visited us, failed in respect by not meeting you at a distance. I entreat you to excuse my crime, and also to inform me how you have come hither alone."

On this his majesty narrated to her at length the various circumstances which had brought him there; and when he had finished, Le Fung retired to acquaint her sister-in-law, who was surnamed Wang,

with what had befallen her. Wang was full of joy at the intelligence, and followed the other into the hall to pay her obeisance to the imperial guest. She did not remain long, however, knowing that his majesty would like to be left alone with his bride. She accordingly took her leave, when Ching Tĭh called the lady to his side, and there they continued, drinking to each other's health, and rejoicing in the first emotions of their love, until the sun had set beneath the western hills.

CHAP. XXXVII.

> "Good actions meet at length good recompense,
> And wickedness just vengeance ne'er escapes.
> Long time Han He to happiness did sow,
> And reaped reward at last, — the beauteous flower
> Rearing its lofty stalk, his pond amidst."

THOUGH Chow Yung had been prevailed upon by Joo Lung to pass the night upon the hill, he could not avoid feeling anxious about the Emperor; and, therefore, as soon as it was light he arose and dressed, and proceeded to take leave of his entertainer.

"Many thanks," said he, "for the warm love you showed me yesterday. I ventured in consequence of it to intrude upon you for the whole night. I must express my obligations to you also for your distinguished entertainment; gratitude is indeed engraven upon my heart; and now I cannot remain here any longer, as my thoughts run upon the Emperor. When you return

to your allegiance we shall have the pleasure of renewing our conversation." With these words he bade his friend good-bye, but Joo Lung, in the first place, ordered a servant to spread a parting feast upon the table; this being done, the two men partook of the provisions, and pledged each other till they were half drunk, when Yung took his leave, being accompanied by Joo Lung for a considerable distance.

As soon as he was left alone, the general urged on his horse towards the village of Nan Laon, and when he reached it he began to look out for houses of entertainment, and the first which met his eye was the 'Lung and Fung.' Conceiving that he would find his majesty there, he dismounted and entered, and seeing nobody, he raised his voice, and called for the landlord to make his appearance quickly. No person, however, answered his call for some time, and he began bawling out, when, at length, Mrs. Wang was aroused, and came out inquiring whether he wanted wine or a lodging?

" I want neither," replied Yung, " but

only to ask whether a young stranger from the capital lodged here last night?"

Before Wang had time to return him any answer, Le Fung, who was behind the screen, and overheard the question, had gone in and told Ching Tĭh. His majesty, on hearing of Yung's arrival, came out to welcome him, and led him into the room behind. When they had both sat down, the Emperor asked him about the robbers, and the general informed him of the dream which Joo Lung had had, and of his desire to return to his allegiance, to his majesty's great delight. Having thus given an account of his own adventure, he asked who Le Fung was, and the Emperor recounted to him how he had met with her, and had promoted her to the western palace.

Yung felt very dissatisfied at the proceeding, but his majesty had carried matters so far that it was of no use to interfere. He therefore constrained himself to advance and pay his obeisance to the lady. As soon as he had resumed his seat, who should make his appearance but Le Lung, on his

return from his hunting. Finding his sister sitting there with two young and gallant-looking strangers, talking and laughing, he flew into a rage, and began to reprove her, and upbraid her shamelessness. Fung, however, hastily advanced to him, and made him acquainted with the real state of the case, on which he became alarmed, and approached to kneel before the Emperor. Ching Tĭh inquired who he was, and being told by Le Fung that it was her brother, and that he had been guilty of rudeness solely in ignorance, he instantly observed that he could not in that case feel offended, and requested Lung to be seated, as he was the brother of his wife.

That matter being thus adjusted, his majesty introduced Lung and Chow Yung to each other; and Lung having inquired who he was, "That," said Ching Tĭh, "is the rebel-exterminating general, Chow Yung;" and on learning this nothing could exceed the joy and respect which the young man displayed.

The Emperor next commanded that orders should be given to all the servants not to

let his presence be known, and that the sign-board should be taken down, lest its peculiarity should occasion some annoyance; and these things being done, he requested a feast to be served up that he might enjoy himself with Le Lung and the general.

Next day he addressed himself to Chow Yung: "I was divinely warned," said he, "to come privately into Këang Nan, and search for individuals who would prove a strong support to the empire. I have gone over several foo, ridding the people of their oppressors, and now that I have found the hero of Peach-flower Hill returning to his allegiance, and have beside met with Le Fung and her brother, the wishes of my heart have not been frustrated. Having here a place to remain in, and Le Lung to protect my person, I am under no apprehensions, and as your native place is not far from this, and you wish to visit the tombs of your ancestors, you had better proceed thither soon. When you come back, we shall return all together to the capital."

"I will proceed to my village," replied Yung, "in accordance with your majesty's orders; but I hope you will be exceedingly careful of your royal person, and save me from anxiety by not rambling to any other place."

At the same time he strictly charged Le Fung and Le Lung to wait carefully upon the Emperor, and keep constantly in that inner chamber, to prevent his presence from being known outside. "I will return," added he, "when I have visited the tombs, and then we shall proceed together to the capital."

Lung and his sister promised obedience to his injunctions, and he forthwith bundled up his clothes, and knocking his head to the ground took his leave of the Emperor. This done, he again repeated his orders to the new guardians of the royal person, and then proceeded towards his native place in Hwing Chow, enjoying that first of human pleasures, a return with glory to the village from which he sprang.

It is now necessary that we introduce another personage to the acquaintance of

the reader. There resided in Soo Chow a retired officer called Sung Yin, but generally known by the title Han He. During the time of his vigour he had been called to fill the office of prefect in Yuĕ Se. On reaching his foo, he found that there was one very wicked practice widely prevalent among the inhabitants, for, when one or two daughters had been born in a family, they would not nourish any more children of that sex, but put them to death. As soon as He became acquainted with this custom, he published a proclamation concerning it, and at the same time called together all the fathers among the people, and all the civil and military officers, in order that he might represent it to them in the light of principle. When they were assembled, he addressed them to the following effect: —

"The gift of life is vouchsafed to human beings, without distinction of male or female. Parents, therefore, ought to reflect on the love of life which is thus displayed by heaven, and bring up all their progeny to maturity. In this way only can they

act according to the principles of kindness and love.

"And, now, on what account is it that you abandon your daughters? Is it not because you think that as they marry into other families they are of no advantage to their parents? Well, suppose that every body were to act on this principle, we should soon be without any daughters at all, and then where could men find wives and concubines to raise up families? or if one wished to have a son to transmit his name to posterity, where could he find him? If you kill your daughters at their birth you are in effect killing the wives of those who come after you, and even their sons. What could be more cruel than this, more destructive of principle, more opposite to humanity? You, officers, must exert yourselves, and exhort the people to virtue, that we may escape the anger of Heaven."

On hearing the above speech the officers bowed their heads to the ground, and replied, "The sentiments which our parent promulgates are undoubtedly correct, but the people are poor, and not able to bring up

many children. It is better, therefore, that they should throw away their daughters and nourish their sons; but we dare not cause our parent pain by opposing his great doctrines."

On this reply Han He at once took his own purse, and caused a hospital for infants to be established. He also hired a great many nurses, and whenever any of the people had a child, whether boy or girl, which they were not able to bring up, he allowed it to be brought to the hospital, and had it attended to there. Afterwards, when the children were grown up, he made a regulation that any person might take one of them away, either to adopt as a son, or to take in marriage for himself, or to give to one of his own sons, on payment of a certain sum; and the money thus accruing was paid over as wages to the nurses; and at the same time he decreed heavy penalties against those individuals who should again sell any of the children, thus received, for their own gain. By this proceeding, as the hospital continued to be maintained, he saved an innumerable multitude of lives

in the province of Yŭe Se, and the example being afterwards followed by others his merit was so much increased as to be immeasurable. It is an old saying, "That virtue and wickedness, when they come to a head, have at last their recompense;" and in the case of Han He it was verified in the person of his daughter, through whom he attained to the highest dignities, and became one of the royal kindred.

From the time of the above transaction the official star of Han He went on to brighten, until in little more than ten years he had attained the dignity of president of the board of revenue. In that office he remained till his eightieth year, which was the sixteenth year of Hung Che, when he resigned his rank and retired to private life.

His wife Wang brought him two sons and one daughter. The eldest son, named Kin, at the time when we introduce the family into our story, was at the age of twenty-eight, and had gained the rank of Sew Tsae. His brother, named Paou, had not addicted himself to literature, but was

devoted to martial exercises. The daughter's name was Tsae Hea.

Her mother dreamed one night that a bright moon descended upon her, and from that time she conceived. When the child was born, a strange perfume filled the chamber, and by the time she was sixteen her beauty rivalled the fairness of the moon, and the brightness of a flower, and she was moreover profoundly skilled in learning; a fit prize for a fortunate scholar, but hitherto unengaged. The whole family in fact, old and young, were ever accumulating a stock of meritorious deeds.

The tenth day of the sixth month of the year in which the Emperor's rambling took place was Han He's eighty-first birth-day, and his relations and friends, both near and distant, were all expected to assemble to offer their congratulations. His wife and servants were discussing early in the morning the arrangements for a feast to heighten the enjoyments of the day, when a flower-boy brought word that the lilies in the pond in front of the hall had all opened, but that in the midst of them there arose a

stalk more than five or six inches higher than any of the others, and supporting a calyx as large as a bowl, and streaked with the five colours, so bright as to dazzle the eyes, though it was still shut. The stalk, he said, rose straight up, and as it moved slowly about, nothing could exceed its elegance.

When the old gentleman had heard this description he thought that of all the lilies which had opened their red and white petals in the pond, though some of them had been very pretty, there never had been one so uncommon as this. He therefore walked immediately to the pond, in company with his wife and family, and there they found it just as the boy described. They leant upon the railing for a while contemplating it, and after breakfast Han He proceeded by himself to look at it again.

As he drew near to the side of the pond he was saluted by a gentle perfume-bearing breeze, so grateful that it would have caused a man to forget all his sorrows in an instant. Han He felt himself deliciously cool, and the fragrant undulating

wind moved onward to the steps of the hall, so that all the people of the house, though it was the hottest season of the year, found no use for their fans.

The flower appeared to the old man exceedingly singular, but he could not tell its name, nor could he find it out even after consulting a good many books, such as the "Register of Fragrant Herbs," the "Hill Classic," &c. He next applied to many florists and nursery-men, but not one of them knew it, while all praised its beauty, and said that it must be an omen of some good fortune, though they could not tell what.

At last there arrived one day to look at it a priest of Taou in his feather dress. As his appearance and movements were extraordinary, Han He was attentively considering him when the stranger pointed to the green calyx, and exclaimed, —

"Fine flower! fine flower!
With pistils shut thou wait'st for him
Who shall transplant thee far from home
Into the pepper bower.
Have patience for a little hour,
And thou shalt see him, like a fairy, floating come.

Wandering dragon! wandering dragon!
Thou 'rt come a thousand le with feigned dreams,
Seeking a mate whose nature thee beseems.
The fung is here
Thy royal heart to cheer:
For great effects shall from thy gamesome sport appear."

The words were only indistinctly heard by Han He, yet they were not so enigmatical but that he half understood them, and saw that they must contain some meaning beneath their figurative dress. He, therefore, approached and bowed to the Taouist, saying at the same time, "Honoured teacher, you are able to resolve the doubts of men and widely to extend their knowledge; will you have the goodness to tell me the name of this flower?"

"This," said the other, "is what the book of the fairies calls the kéung. If one has found the lam gem in his grounds he shall have a beautiful wife, and when the kéung flower bursts its calyx, his daughter shall find a good husband. Such things are not produced in vain; Heaven has a meaning in them; and it must be, that be-

cause you have spent your whole life in accumulating an inexhaustible stock of meritorious deeds, Heaven regards you with favour, and vouchsafes you this omen of good fortune, which will fall to the lot of your family, and be enjoyed for several generations. Observe this flower, which stands straightly, like a tasseled crown. Let the Emperor once give the order, and the calyx will unfold, and in the middle will be another stem complete. It is now like a scholar who keeps his compositions to himself, awaiting the proper time for their display. But seven days is a period of revolution, and suffices to display the intentions of Heaven. At the end of that period I think his majesty will not be far from this. Do you carefully attend to the appearance of your visitors, to secure the happiness of your family. If you think that I am lying, you may make a mistake with him whom I point out before your eyes."

Han He was exceedingly delighted with the explanation of the extraordinary stranger, and was about to order the cook

to get ready some feasting vegetables, when the other expressed an unwillingness to wait, and in the twinkling of an eye vanished into thin air.

The old gentleman was filled with wonder, but immediately concluded that it was a genius who had come to give him the information, and determined to return thanks kneeling before Heaven. He, therefore, lighted some candles, burned incense, and worshipped in the open air.

> " Both far and near all men his virtues praised,
> And then his pond produced the happy flower."

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Han He formed a resolution in consequence of the information he had received from the Taou priest, and every day he caused a feast to be prepared, and invited a great many of his friends and old acquaintances, under the pretext of exhibiting to them the strange flower. In a little time the entrance to his house was as much crowded as that of Kung Pĭh Hae had been, and the circumstances got all bruited abroad, just as he desired, for his object was to see if the omen would meet with its fulfilment.

Remembering also the words of the stranger, that some happiness was in store, which should cross his threshold, he supposed that they would be verified in connection with his daughter, and therefore he took a red card and wrote upon it that a këung flower had suddenly been pro-

duced in his pond, which continued in the bud, without unfolding its petals, and that if any individual, whatever might be his rank, should cause the bud to open at his summons, he would give him his daughter in marriage. Having written two of these cards, he pasted them upon two small sheds at the two sides of the pond.

The contents of the cards were in a very little time transmitted far and wide, and multitudes of people from various parts came to try their fortune, but without success, the bud continuing shut as before.

The news at last reached Nan Laon, where the Emperor continued to amuse himself with Le Fung and her brother. One day Lung entered the chamber with a smile upon his countenance, and, addressing himself to Ching Tĭh, said that he had heard of a very strange occurrence; and then, in reply to a question from his majesty, related the foregoing phenomena about the flower.

When he had done, Ching Tĭh asked whether the young lady were pretty, and being told that she was the belle of Soo

Chow, he determined to go and see the wonder. Le Fung remonstrated with him, and tried to recal to his memory the charges of Chow Yung, but the Emperor only smiled. "The true Heaven-commissioned Emperor," said he, "has a hundred protecting spirits. Don't be anxious, for I will soon come back;" and with these words he told Le Lung to attend him.

Lung was indignant at his own imprudence in mentioning the subject, but he had no remedy. The golden lips had spoken, and he was obliged to comply with their wishes. His majesty then changed his clothes, and after telling Le Fung to keep close to her chamber, in order to prevent his departure from being known, he ordered Lung to lead the way, and bent his steps directly towards Soo Chow.

In a few days they reached the district, and found the roads crowded with people, all saying that they were going to Han He's to see the keüng flower. As they drew near to his residence, however, Ching Tĭh found that it was evening, and told Le

Lung to look out for a lodging-house, where they might stay till the next day. They accordingly rested that night in one of the inns, and next morning after breakfast mixed among the crowd, and proceeded to the house.

On their arrival, they found thousands of people round about the pond, but the Emperor proceeded at once towards the hall. There he found a card to the same purport as those which were fixed up at the two ends of the pond, and saw a gentleman sitting in the hall with two rows of attendants, having on a plain cap and garments, and with a long beard descending at once from his chin, his upper lip, and his cheeks. Supposing that this must be Han He, he advanced to salute him. The old man descended from his seat to meet him, and after he had handed him to the guest's seat, inquired where he had come from. "I belong to the capital," replied his majesty, "and am called Hwang King. I was on a visit to some of my friends in this quarter, and having heard of the strange flower in your pond, I am come to see it."

The attention of Han He was aroused by the sound of the word capital, and he bent his eyes searchingly upon the stranger. Perceiving him to be of a mien and aspect much above the common order, he instantly conjectured that he was the person intimated by the Taouist, — even the Emperor. He had heard, moreover, of what the Emperor had done in Choo Chow, and began to settle it in his mind that the individual before him could be no other.

" Since you wish to see the flower," he replied therefore, " I will go with you ;" and with these words he began to descend the hall steps along with the Emperor and Le Lung. As soon as the crowd saw that Han He was coming, they opened a path for him and his companions right to the side of the pond, and the old gentleman then pointed out the flower. Ching Tĭh inquired how many days it was since the flower made its appearance.

" It is now seven days, and it has not yet unfolded. I have, therefore, put up the card, saying I will give my daughter to him at whose summons it opens."

"In that case I will let you see me order it to open." At the same time his majesty recalled to his memory Woo How, of the Tang dynasty, who caused flowers to bloom in winter by his proclamation, and Ming Hwang, who hastened their unfolding by the beating of a drum. If they could do so, thought he, why should not I be able to do as much. He then prayed silently, saying, "God of the flower! God of the flower! if it is fated that I and the young lady should wed, open the flower without delay." When the prayer was finished he pointed with his hand to the flower, saying "Open quick! Open quick!" and hardly were the words spoken, when the threads which bound the bud gave way, and the beautiful petals stood wide displayed. All the spectators burst into a shout of wonder, and Han He knelt in confusion at his feet, exclaiming with a loud voice, "My eyes are without eyeballs; not knowing that your imperial highness had come here, I did not meet you on my knees. Forgive my sin."

Ching Tĭh, perceiving that he was now

discovered, and that his true character could no longer be concealed, immediately inquired of Han He how he knew him; on which the other informed him of what the genius had said. His majesty then ordered him to rise up and be seated; and all the spectators understanding now that the stranger was the Emperor in disguise, came forward to render him their homage. This his majesty allowed them to do, and immediately after dismissed them; but the thing took wind, and all the civil and military officers of the city appeared in a little to obtain an audience. Han He also brought out his family to do reverence; and his majesty appointed Tsae Hea to be one of his noble ladies, and that she should return along with him to the palace. After this a feast was served up in honour of the occasion; and there we must leave the Emperor for a time.

The colonel Seu Seang of Choo Chow, whose punishment we have related in a former chapter, was one of the creatures of Lew Kin, and on the day in which he was imprisoned he had despatched a letter to

the Eunuch's hiding place, telling him to raise a body of troops and come and seize the royal person. On the arrival of his letter, Lew Kin instantly sent messengers to find out where the Emperor and his attendant were, who discovered that his majesty was at Han He's, and instantly carried the word back to their master. On receiving the information, Tŏ Gaou made instant arrangements to collect their troops for the expedition, and at the same time sent word of their movements to Chin Haou, requesting him to follow after with other soldiers to support them. This done, he ordered their baggage and provisions to be got in readiness for moving; and after three discharges of a signal gun, he broke up their camp, and began the march towards Këang Nan.

All the districts of Woo Pĭh were awed into submission, so that in a few days his army reached the borders of Këang Nan, and encamped in Këang Ning foo, about ten le from the city. News of their arrival were speedily conveyed to Lew Sëën Ke, sub-prefect of Shang Yuen hëën, and put

him in the utmost consternation. He flew at once to the port-house of Kin Ling, and proceeded thence to the governor, Yin She Hăng, with the intelligence. His excellency was thrown into great alarm, and instantly sent a letter to Këang Hwae, announcing the danger, and summoning the commanding officer, Chang Chang Chun, and the colonel of Ting Yuen, Mă Hăng Shan, to repair to his office. Orders were also sent to all the other officers, civil and military, to the same effect; and all being speedily assembled, they began to consult about some plan to meet the enemy.

As the result of their deliberations, the governor ordered the two officers abovementioned, and captain Lo Tsae Sze, to lead 10,000 men out of the city, and engage the rebels. They were, however, far inferior in number, and, after a short battle, were defeated with great slaughter, insomuch that their bodies covered the plain, and the ground was all stained with their blood. The officers retreated with their shattered forces into the city; and another sally next day having met with a similar

fate, they determined from that time to maintain themselves within the walls.

Tŏ Gaou instantly gave orders to surround the city, and to prepare moveable turrets from which to attack it; and Yin Hăng, seeing the strength of the rebels, could only send a letter to Soo Chow informing the emperor of the danger which threatened him. As soon as Sung Ching, the prefect of the chow, received the letter, he put it into his sleeve, and proceeded in the greatest consternation to Han He's, to communicate the intelligence to Ching Tĭh. His majesty was much alarmed, and began to repent that he had not attended to the advice of Chow Yung and Le Fung. It was of no use to repent, however, and he proceeded to deliberate with the others about some plan by which they might send troops to succour Këang Ning. While they were consulting together, lieutenant Chaou Lin arrived in haste, and, kneeling down before his majesty, reported that the rebels, by means of their moveable turrets, had been able to overlook the city, and to burn the houses with fiery arrows. The

city had in consequence, been lost, and many of the people had been injured. The colonel Mă Hăng Shan, the sub-prefect, Lew Séén Ke, and the captain, Lo Tsae Sze, had all been killed; and the governor Yin She Hăng, with the commander Chang Chang Chun, were now waiting in chains, with a few hundreds of the troops that had escaped, and asking for death.

This announcement increased the Emperor's grief. He instantly ordered the two officers to be introduced, and saying, that victory and defeat were the common occurrences of war, and that the calamity was owing to his own fault in letting himself be known, he ordered their bonds to be loosed, and then questioned them closely about the rebels. Before the governor had time to reply, a soldier entered with the news that after Kéàng Nang was lost, the two districts of Ling Peih and Lin Hwae had instantly submitted, and that the rebels, amounting to one hundred thousand, had approached and closely invested the city.

On this additional intelligence, Ching

Tĭh was entirely put to a stand. He knew not what to do, when Le Lung and Sung Paou, came forward, and entreated, since their force was not able to go out and engage the rebels, that he would write a decree, with which they would force their way through the besiegers, and go and bring succour.

Before they had finished, all the officers arrived, requesting leave to go out and fight. His majesty assented to their proposal, and accordingly sent Chang Chang Chun with five thousand men, supported by the major Yeu K'hwan and the lieutenant Chaou Lin, while he himself, with Han He and some others, ascended the watch-tower to see the fight. On witnessing the number of the rebels, and their strict environment of the city, they wished to send word to Chang Chun not to venture forth; but before they had time to do so, they heard the signal gun discharged, and saw the party sally forth.

The thieves advanced to meet them in a single line. Swords and spears were raised on both sides at once, amid the din of

drums and trumpets, and the royal troops fought with determined spirits and courage. Being few in number, however, and the rebels being many, they found it impossible, after the hardiest exertions, to penetrate to the enemies' camp. Observing this, and being afraid they might be defeated, his majesty commanded a retreat to be sounded, to reserve his forces for future action. He then gave orders that every soldier should be well provided with wood and stones to maintain the gates against the thieves, and then descended to inspect the troops that had been engaged. As there were only a few wounded, he ordered a feast to be prepared to comfort their hearts, and then retired to Han He's to consult with his friends.

> "The imprudent prince letting his name be known,
> Involved his people in calamities."

CHAP. XXXIX.

"To plan is man's; to give success is Heaven's.
All schemes the Eunuch tried, and all in vain
Fool that he was! when rais'd to highest rank;
Yet still a prey to discontent! His fall
Taught him repentance and sad misery."

LEAVING for a time the Emperor in his beleaguered condition, we must return to follow the wanderings of the high guardian, Leang Choo. After his adventure with the Chae family, the minister continued in great anxiety to prosecute his search for his majesty over several foo, but without the slightest success.

One day as he was passing by the borders of Gan Hwing, he saw a small boat at a considerable distance off, containing an old man in white garments, and with a silk cap, of a flowing mien, like one of the immortals, and singing in a loud and clear voice.

Leang Choo stopped to listen, and heard the following song: —

"Upon the sea doth rest my boat,
Amid the smoky spray;
On the clear hill-top, far remote,
My wife and children stay.
I love to see the bridge-crossed tide,
During the spring rains gush;
And curling up the mountain side
The mists from morning's flush.

"Full oft the autumn moon I hail,
As 'mid the waves I lie;
Or leaning o'er the slender rail
To court the breeze I try.
For now the council no more need
Of my advice does find,
Or right or wrong, all things proceed,
And I'm not called to mind.

"To fishers, brothers, now! I say,
And rustics clasp my hands,
No verse I cap, — no finger play,
The forfeit oft demands.
The game of words, the ivory cards,
With wine-cup pacing round,
Alas! they raise my fond regards,
Not here, not here, they're found.

"My person I am doomed to hide;
I'm forced the world to shun.
My surname chang'd, my name denied,
An useless course I run;

> Nay more, a fool and mad I seem,
>   To baulk a traitor's rage;
> As dumb and deaf men all me deem,
>   When I their thoughts engage."

From the tenor of the above song the guardian concluded that the boatman was some scholar who had retired to the hills, while at the same time the words betokened considerable knowledge of the world. He waited, therefore, till the boat drew near to the shore, and then keeping his eyes intently fixed upon the old man, whom should he find him to be but Wang Show Jin, superintendent of the board of war?

At the sight of his old friend, Leang Choo felt as if he had obtained a precious jewel, and instantly cried out, "Brother Wang, brother Wang, now that you have become a fung swan in Heaven, do you still think of the swallows and sparrows with which you formerly mixed in the world?"

Hearing himself called in this way Show Jin turned his eyes upon the speaker, and recognised the high chancellor Leang Choo. He was alarmed and lost his colour

for a moment, but immediately directed the boat's head to be turned to the bank, and hastened joufylly to salute him.

"How have you come here?" was the first question Jin addressed; and the other, instead of answering it, inquired how he happened to be alive among men again.

After they had come to an explanation on these two points, the guardian observed, "I had my suspicions indeed, when I heard it reported that you had drowned yourself, for it did not seem like a person of your spirit and determination to throw your life away on account of difficulties that might threaten you; and now I find that I was right."

They laughed awhile over the way in which the Eunuch had been baffled, and then Leang Choo informed his friend that Kin was no more about the court, but had been obliged to make his escape from it by flight. Show Jin was delighted with the intelligence, but refused at first to assent to the guardian's proposal, that he should quit his obscurity, and join him in his search after the Emperor, and afterwards

give his assistance again to the court, and complete the destruction of the crafty traitors. He was prevailed upon at last, however, by the urgency with which he was pressed, and by his respect for the anxious regard which he knew that the guardian cherished for the kingdom and the people. He accordingly told the boatman to return, ascended the shore himself, and proceeded with the guardian towards Kèang Nan. They prosecuted their search for some time, without being able to discover any traces of the Emperor, till at last Leang Choo remembered that Chow Yung belonged originally to Hwing Chow, and concluded that he would be sure to come there with his companion. They bent their steps therefore toward that direction, and reached Hwing Chow in the course of a few days, but there their quest was equally unsuccessful. It happened, however, after this disappointment, that they were met on the road by Chow Yung himself, as he was returning from the tombs of his ancestors. At first the joy of all parties was excessive at this rencounter, but when the

general approached to salute Leang Choo respectfully, the latter began to reproach him for the trouble which he had compelled him to undergo, and inquired where his majesty was.

Yung excused himself on the ground that he had been urged by the Emperor, contrary to his own inclination, and having told where he had left his majesty, they directed their route towards Nan Laon; and Leang Choo, having introduced his companions to each other, they lightened the way by a recital of their respective adventures.

After some days they drew near to the borders of Soo Chow, when the first thing which met their view was a crowd of the people coming hastily along, seemingly in great sorrow, leading their boys and carrying their daughters. Yung's suspicions were at once excited, and advancing forward to question the fugitives, he learned the danger in which his majesty was placed in consequence of the movements of Lew Kin. The people moreover said, that all their houses having been burned or destroyed by

the rebels, they were now flying for shelter somewhere else.

This intelligence threw the three officers into the greatest consternation. Chow Yung addressed himself to the guardian, and said, that the danger was too urgent to allow them time to deliberate. He then proposed to proceed himself immediately to Peach-flower Hill to obtain the aid of Kwŏ Joo Lung, and advised Leang Choo to endeavour to raise the troops of all the neighbouring hëën. Having stated his intentions, he took out the cloud-girdle veil, and bound it about his head, repeating at the same time the charm, and in an instant his feet began to tread the clouds, and he disappeared in the air. And no sooner was he gone, than the guardian and Show Jin urged their horses with the whip, and proceeded to follow his proposal.

As soon as Yung reached Peach-flower Hill, he descended from the clouds, and went right up to the entrance of the robber's encampment. He then told an individual whom he saw to inform Joo Lung of his arrival; and when the man went in

he found the chief talking with his sisters about the manner in which they should return to their allegiance. No sooner did they hear of Yung's arrival, than Lung came out to meet him, and received him into the gold-dividing porch. The general then acquainted him with the reason of his appearance, and besought him to raise his band in haste.

Lung at once gave the necessary orders to his captains, and proceeded within along with Chow Yung to put on his armour. This done, he told his sisters to take charge of the baggage and provisions, and follow after, and then finding the whole band collected, he arranged that Yung should lead forward ten thousand, while he himself would come up with the rest to support him. Having made this disposition of his forces, he issued orders for an instant march, and with three discharges of a signal, they all set themselves in motion, and decended the hill.

Speedy intelligence of these movements was conveyed to Tŏ Gaou by some of his scouts, and the rebel instantly assembled

his officers to make arrangements for engaging the enemy. His attention, however, was first called to Leang Choo and Wang Show Jin, who had come forward with the troops which they had succeeded in raising. These unfortunately proved too few to withstand the force of the rebels, and were put to flight by Gaou after they had sustained a heavy loss. They fled in the direction of Nan Laon, and therefore they met Chow Yung advancing to their support. The general at once engaged the rebels, and rescued Leang Choo and his troops, which he ordered to form again behind, while he led his own soldiers, flushed with victory, forward in pursuit.

When they approached the city, however, Tŏ Gaou brought up fresh troops to protect the retreat of the others; and as by this time it was getting dark, both sides drew off to a distance of ten le, and encamped. In a little time longer Joo Lung and his sisters arrived, and Yung called them to a meeting in his tent, to consult about the best way to defeat the enemy.

Lung being asked his opinion, replied that it was too late then to do any thing, but that he would next day engage the rebels, so that they might have an opportunity of seeing their strength, and could then adapt their measures accordingly. This proposal being approved, orders were issued to maintain a careful watch during the night, lest the enemy should attempt to surprise the camp. In consequence of this no alarm occurred; and on the morrow Joo Lung proceeded to the encampment of Tŏ Gaou, and challenged him to fight. Gaou seized his spear, mounted his horse, and, riding forth, called out to the other to declare his name and receive death.

"Can you open your dog's eyes," returned Lung, "without recognising Kwŏ Joo Lung, chief of Peach-flower hill? Quickly offer your head, for if you do not I will take your dog's life."

With this he raised his silver spear, and dashed forward. Gaou, on his part, met him boldly, and the two fought furiously for about twenty minutes without either gaining any advantage. Chow Yung then

advanced quickly to Lung's assistance, being afraid he might have the worst; but Gaou's wife no sooner perceived the movement than she rode from the ranks to meet him. After some time, Tŏ Gaou, having had proof of his opponent's courage, and being afraid that his wife would be defeated by Chow Yung, pretended to be worsted, and rode off. Lung, suspecting no trick, followed in pursuit, when Gaou suddenly raising the fountain-calling veil, a sheet of water covered the ground to the depth of three feet, and ran bubbling towards the imperial troops. The soldiers could not stand against it, but hastily retreated; and even Yung and Joo Lung were afraid, and urged their horses to flight, while Gaou followed after, cheering his army, to the pursuit. Fortunately there was a hill in the south-west which was rather level on the top, so that the soldiers were able to collect upon it, and by discharging their arrows they succeeded in keeping the enemy off, and saving themselves from an entire defeat; for Gaou, seeing the strength of their position, took down the veil, and

called his soldiers back to their own camp.

When the rebels had gone, Joo Lung numbered his defeated forces, and finding a great many wounded and missing, he proceeded to the council-tent in great sorrow. Chow Yung then proposed a plan. "It is of no use," said he, "attempting to engage the rebels so long as they have such an article as that veil. But I will fly to-night into their camp, kill Tŏ Gaou, and carry off the veil. This done, we shall easily exterminate the rest."

On hearing this proposal all the others felt assured, saying that they had nothing to fear while the general possessed an article which would enable him to fly in such a way. The plan being thus determined on, Yung further addressed them, telling them after he went away to keep all the men under arms, and all the horses saddled, and that Lung and Show Jin should lead the army forward to attack the rebels, as soon as they discerned a stream of light. In the mean time he would fly into the city, and sally forth with the troops there to

attack the enemy on the other side. In this way they would gain a complete victory; but if they did not perceive the flame, then they were not to move until he should return and lead them forward.

After these arrangements had been made, the soldiers proceeded to take a good fighting meal, after which all resumed their armour to be ready for action. As soon as it was dark, Yung put on a suit of black, deposited a sharp knife about his person, and then bound the cloud-girdle around his head, repeated the words of the charm, and began to mount into the air. When he arrived at the rebels camp, he descended, and alighted under the screen of the Eunuch's tent. Lew Kin and Tŏ Gaou were consulting together inside, and Yung heard the former speaking to the other as his son, and telling him to attack the city to-morrow with all his might; that they might get possession of the stupid prince; and that after that they would march their army and sweep the empire clean. "But this design must not be delayed," concluded the Eunuch, "lest some foreign nation hear

the condition of the empire, and come and attack it."

Tŏ Gaou then pointed to the veil, which was lying on a table, and said, "Father, you need not be anxious, for with this veil we shall accomplish our undertaking."

As soon as he had heard their consultation, Yung formed his plan. He instantly flew out to the front of the tent, and set the camp on fire. This done, he returned back to the tent, crying out aloud, "The camp in front is on fire;" and Gaou, lifting up his eyes at the sound, saw, indeed, the flames blazing to Heaven, and rushed out, calling upon the soldiers to extinguish them. The moment he was gone, Yung advanced to the table, took up the veil, and instantly mounting into the clouds, and taking the opposite direction to that by which he had entered, flew into the city of Soo Chow.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the soldiers, the flames continued to increase; when Gaou remembered the power of the fountain-calling veil, and hurried back to the tent to fetch it. But what was his con-

sternation when he came to the table and found that it was gone? To add to his trouble, while he was looking about for it, a furious noise of fighting outside the camp assailed his ears. Hastily putting on his armour, he seized a spear, mounted a horse, and proceeded to the front, where he was met by Joo Lung, with whom he maintained a furious combat, until he was assailed also in his rear.

This last attack was in consequence of a sally from the city, for Chow Yung had alighted at once upon the watch-tower, and called a soldier to go and inform the Emperor that the general Chow Yung wanted to see him. The intelligence was hailed by Ching Tĭh as if it were some one descending from Heaven, and he issued orders that he should at once be introduced to his presence. The general entered the hall without delay, and, after paying his obeisance, entreated the Emperor to pardon him for being so long in coming to his assistance.

His majesty replied that the fault was all his own; but scarcely had the words left his lips, when a noise of artillery with-

out the city broke upon them. Yung ascended the watch-tower for observation, and seeing the fire of the discharges, he knew that his army had attacked the rebels. He then descended, and calling the soldiers to sally forth, the Emperor ordered Le Lung and Sung Paou, to follow with five thousand men. The gates were thrown open in an instant, and out they dashed, with a fury which resistlessly bore down all opposition.

Tŏ Gaou, as we have said, was engaged with Joo Lung, when he saw his rear getting into confusion, and heard that the enemy had sallied from the city. He became greatly afraid, and maintained the battle in a desultory manner, while the royal troops pressed upon him on both sides, and made great havoc among his men. At last, summoning up all his courage and strength, he opened a bloody path, and fled, followed by his defeated forces.

> "Vain are all plans, opposed to Heaven's decree,
> Which will not spare the traitorous crafty Kin."

CHAP. XL.

" In vain the rebels fiercely strove ;
The will of Heaven man cannot move.
They met their fate — a piteous sight,
With forces lost in baffled fight.
Prisoners themselves, they only gain'd
The blood that day their vests which stain'd."

After the defeat which the rebels sustained, Show Jin pursued them as far as the borders of Shan Tung. There, however, he drew off his troops, in consequence of a steep and difficult pass in front, which was lined on both sides with trees, so that he feared Gaou might have placed some troops in it in ambush. The first night he encamped at the distance of ten le from that place, but afterwards retired to Soo Chow.

On his arrival there he proceeded, along with Leang Choo, Joo Lung and his sisters, and the officers of the various hëen,

who had assisted in the late actions, to do homage to the Emperor. After they had all inquired about his health, Ching Tĭh turned to the guardian, and asked why he had come there, and how he had met with Wang Show Jin. When Leang Choo had satisfied these questions by a narrative of the preceding events, Chow Yung came forward, and represented that their success in raising the siege was entirely owing to the assistance of Kwŏ Joo Lung.

The imperial countenance expressed the liveliest joy at the intelligence, and his majesty addressed Joo Lung that he counted himself fortunate in having obtained his assistance, and that when he returned to the court he would promote him, and reward his merits.

The interview with the officers being closed, his majesty had a large feast spread out, to recompense the labours of the soldiers, after which he appointed Wang Show Jin commander-in-chief, and Chow Yung and Joo Lung the two leaders of the van; the three to form a council of war.

The generals were soon called to active service, for Tŏ Gaou had, in the mean time, succeeded in retreating with his broken army to Kèang Ning, and was joined by the rebels who had been formerly stationed there, and so had been absent from the defeat. After all, however, Gaou found he had only a few more than ten thousand men remaining, and instantly sent off a letter to Chin Haou, informing him of his distress, and requesting him to come to his assistance. Haou was at once prepared to respond to his call, for immediately after Lew Kin and Gaou threw themselves under his protection, he had sent messengers to the various mountain districts to purchase elephants; and when he had got several hundred of these animals, he set proper persons to train them how to behave during a fight, in order that they might be in readiness for future use.

The arrival of Gaou's letter, therefore, caused him exceeding joy; he at once raised his army and took his march through the districts which had previously submitted to the rebels. When he reached

the borders of Këang Nan, he received another letter from Gaou, in consequence of which he quickened his march, and speedily effected a junction with him in Këang Ning foo.

Having consulted about their plan of operations, Chin Haou sent Gaou forward by private marches with twenty thousand men to bring the enemy to an engagement, telling him if they came out to meet him, to retreat until he had fallen back upon himself, and he would be ready to attack them with his elephants. Accordingly Gaou advanced forward with flags folded, and drums all silent, and fell upon Wang Show Jin, who was by no means prepared for the attack. The onset of the rebels was so furious, that before a soldier could move his hand, a great slaughter had been made. At this juncture, however, Chow Yung and Joo Lung advanced to the assistance of the commander-in-chief with the two wings, on which Gaou pretended to be defeated, and caused his troops to retreat. Yung was in the act of urging his soldiers forward in pursuit, when suddenly

he beheld a large body of elephants make their appearance from behind a hill in his front, very fierce and threatening, and making forward as if they were flying. If any soldier attempted to meet them they laid hold of him with their trunks, and as they moved on an immense number were trodden down and killed. Seeing the danger of his condition, Show Jin commenced his retreat, telling Yung to bring up the rear, when, as the elephants still came on, Yung produced the fountain-caller, and raised it up, when a deluge of white waves rolled towards the rebels. Still the animals would have advanced, had they not been stopped by their attendants, who were afraid lest they should fall into some snare; and on this Yung seeing that the pursuit was stopped, and not daring to advance himself on account of the elephants, rolled up the veil and retired to his commander, who retreated to a distance of ten le, leaving Chin Haou in possession of the field of battle.

The royal troops having secured their camp, Show Jin determined to remain

within the entrenchments till some good plan of action should present itself; and it was in vain, therefore, that Gaou made his appearance several times before it, endeavouring to provoke an engagement.

While affairs were in this situation there appeared upon the scene of action our friends of the Hero-collecting Hill. Chin Fei Heung and Wan Jin Teih, from the time of their contracting the alliance of brotherhood, had been engaged in storing up grass and provisions, assembling men, and purchasing horses. They also kept spies constantly in the capital, to learn all the news of the court, hoping that some movement of the Eunuch and his party might afford them an opportunity to advance with their soldiers, and revenge the wrongs of their fathers.

One day one of these spies brought them word of the condemnation of Lew Kin, and of his subsequent rescue from the field of execution by his adopted son. On hearing these news, Fei Heung formed several bands of the robbers, and despatched them in various directions in quest

of the villain, but without success. At last, as the two brothers were sitting one day in the inner hall, playing at chess, a robber entered, and kneeling said, that a messenger had arrived from the south with news which would require their decision. On this they arose, and proceeded to the worthies' porch, where they told the messenger to be introduced. The man accordingly came in, and kneeling before them, reported the dangerous condition in which the Emperor and his army were now placed in Këang Nan. When he had finished his account, Heung rewarded him with two tablets of silver, and despatched him to watch for further news. Then turning in a rage to Jin Teih, he said, "The worthless prince does not deserve our pity; but our enemies have here displayed themselves, and shall we look upon them with our hands in our sleeves? Tell me your opinion."

> "'Tis well in times of fear and anxious doubt,
> Counsel to ask of those we deem our friends."

CHAP. XLI.

When Fei Heung heard of the Emperor's danger his first impulse was to go and save him; but when he remembered the circumstances of his father's death his rage got the better of him, and he resolved to remain upon the hill. Then again the fierce insolence of the rebels occurred to his mind, and he longed to go and check their violent career. In short, he could not determine what to do, and therefore he applied to his brother for advice.

"From antiquity," replied Jin Teih, "loyal subjects have never allowed themselves to cherish resentment against a monarch or a father; and indeed it was the Eunuch who occasioned the death of your honoured sire. Besides, his majesty has now learned to distinguish between the faithful and the crafty, and therefore it is not only right that you should proceed to

raise the siege of Soo Chow, but the remembrance of your father's death should also spur you on to the enterprise. And consider how much will be gained should you succeed in capturing the chief villain; your own long-cherished resentment will be appeased; his majesty will be rescued; your father's death will be revenged; and your name will find a place in the historian's page as that of a loyal subject and a dutiful son."

Heung at once entered into the justice of his brother's observations, and warmly expressing his agreement, he determined to proceed to the Emperor's rescue, and instantly called out their two sisters to hear their consultation. Mei Yen and Sew Chun instantly appeared, and having asked what business was in hand, Jin Teih communicated to them the news which they had received about the Emperor's danger. The two ladies having also recommended that they should lead their troops to Soo Chow, Heung referred the whole matter to Jin Teih. Thus constituted judge, the latter instantly decided,

and sent orders to the various encampments of his band, commanding all to assemble and receive his orders. He then recommended one beat of the drum, which was the sign for all the captains to collect, and in the mean time he and Heung, with their two sisters, proceeded within to arm themselves. When they came out again they found the whole band collected, on which they marshalled them in marching order, and proceeded directly towards Soo Chow.

On their way Jin Teih purchased a large quantity of white copper, which he had made into several score of copper statues. The soldiers could not understand what he intended by such a measure, but they complied with their leader's orders; and he, intending in this way to cope with the elephants, rejoiced as he saw the work completed.

In the course of some days they approached to Soo Chow, and sent word to Wang Show Jin of their arrival. The commander was overjoyed at the news, and went out of the camp to meet the

heroes, who disarmed themselves, and then followed him to an interview with the Emperor.

After they had paid their obeisance his majesty addressed himself to Fei Heung, and said, "Formerly, through lack of discernment, I was led to believe slanderous representations, and became guilty of causing your father's death. But now you must not cherish feelings of indignation, but exert yourself to the utmost in the present struggle, and when I have returned to the capital I will promote and reward both you and your friend."

Just as the two brothers had finished expressing their thanks, news was brought that the lieutenant-governor of Gan Hwing in Këang Nan had arrived. The Emperor instantly ordered him to be admitted, and then began to deliberate with the generals about the best means to destroy the enemy. Fei Heung having inquired of Wang Show Jin the strength of the rebels, the commander replied that they derived their principal force from their elephants, on which neither guns, arrows, nor stones

could make any impression, and from which his troops had sustained a heavy defeat. Then addressing himself to all present, he asked whether any one could suggest a plan to repel these animals.

Wan Jin Teih responded to his inquiry, and communicated to him something in a whisper about using copper statues for that object. Whatever the plan was, Show Jin praised it, saying that few people could have devised it, and declared that he would carry it into practice next day.

On the morrow, accordingly, orders were transmitted to all the troops to arm themselves immediately after breakfast, and to be in readiness for action. At the same time Chow Yung and Le Lung were sent forward with ten thousand men to lie in ambush in front of the camp upon the right and left, with orders to rush forth all at once upon the rebels, should they be defeated, and obliged to retire in the direction where they lay. Kwŏ Joo Lung and his sister were then instructed to lead the troops, consisting of their own band, forward, to provoke an engagement. Should the enemy

meet them, however, they were to allow themselves to be defeated, and to retreat in a gradual manner, 'till they found that other troops were advancing, when they were to divide into two lines, and retire behind in order to form again, after which a single discharge of a gun would be the signal for them to renew their advance.

Having made these arrangements for the battle, Show Jin left his majesty in the city under charge of Sung Paou, and the vice-governors of two provinces with twenty thousand men, while he himself, with Wan Jin Teih and his three companions, led forward the rest of the troops to support Joo Lung. The copper statues he carried with him on carriages, having first caused the soldiers to fill them with red-hot coals, till the metal glowed from the top to the bottom.

In the mean time Joo Lung and his sister had approached with three thousand men to the rebels encampment, and Tŏ Gaou came forth to attack them, having formed his troops in two bodies. The two sides then joined battle, which Lung con-

tinued to maintain, until Chin Haou gave orders that the elephants should be unloosed and conducted to the fight. Seeing this he began to draw off his men, hotly pursued by Gaou, when a turn in the way displayed to them a body of soldiers advancing with the imperial standard. The rebel was inflamed by the sight, and urged the elephants with more eagerness, so that they dashed forward like so many fierce tigers, while Lung and his sister, understanding that their main body had come up, deployed to the right and left, and allowed the commander to advance.

Show Jin observing that the elephants were quite near, ordered a gun to be discharged, as a signal to the soldiers to bring the copper statues to the front. This was effected in a moment, and when the animals came up to them, mistaking the statues for men, they laid hold of them with their trunks, and lifted them up. The glowing copper, however, soon convinced them of their error, burning them dreadfully, and cleaving to their flesh. The poor creatures attempted to

disengage their trunks, but finding that impossible, they set up a horrible cry as if the mountains had been falling or the earth bursting, and fled back into their own ranks, trampling to death an immense number of the soldiers. Show Jin, seeing his advantage, pushed forward with the rest of the statues, and Joo Lung and his sister advanced again to the combat, so that Lew Kin and his son were seized with terror, after sustaining a complete defeat. The royal troops pursued after them to Këang Ning, into which Gaou threw himself with the remains of his army, determined to hold it out against a siege. This he was instantly called to do, for Show Jin, as soon as he arrived, gave orders to his army to sit down before the city.

As soon as they found themselves secure for the mean time, the Eunuch and Tŏ Gaou proceeded to number their remaining forces, and found that they had lost the larger part of their army, and had scarcely more than ten thousand men remaining, a great many of whom were also wounded, at the same time the royal

troops pressed eagerly upon the city, so that it was with dispirited hearts that the rebel chiefs met together to form some measures for maintaining their position.

While they were consulting together, suddenly a soldier entered the hall, and said, that there were two young ladies outside, who said, that they had come from Prince-flower Hill, and wished to see general Tŏ Gaou. The sorrow of Gaou's countenance disappeared at the intelligence, and in a joyful tone, he exclaimed, " If they are come, we need be under no apprehensions as to our success."

Lew Kin, surprised at his son's words, inquired who the two ladies were, that he spoke in such style, and Gaou replied to him in the following terms: " There is here," said he, " something of which my father and king is ignorant. When we were living some time ago on our hill, I went out one day alone to amuse myself with hunting, having nothing else to do. While I was riding about I happened to catch sight of a large deer running along, and, discharging an arrow, succeeded in

wounding it. It still, however, continued its flight with the arrow sticking in its flesh, on which I pursued it, over a couple of hills, till it led me to a farm-house, surrounded by a thicket of bamboos, and a large number of fine firs, amid which the deer disappeared. Observing several galleries, peering through the thicket, I advanced forward in quest of the prey, when suddenly I came upon two young ladies, seemingly not more than eighteen, exercising themselves on the top of a small mound with swords and spears.

"The skill of the fair combatants was surpassing, and I could not help uttering an exclamation of admiration, which led them to recognise my presence. They immediately looked displeased, and began to reprove me for stealing a gaze upon them. From words we proceeded in a little to blows, when by some witchcraft they took me and carried me into the house, and presented me to an old man of venerable appearance, with white hair and a ruddy countenance, who told me that it was decreed I should marry his daughters. Being a captive, I was

obliged for the time to comply with their wishes, and I hope you will pardon me for not previously consulting yourself.

"When I afterwards questioned the ladies more particularly, I found that their father had lived in retirement upon that hill, for thirty or forty years, and had enjoyed the instructions of some of the genii, so that they had all become profoundly skilled in the arts of witchcraft. On hearing this, I inquired about our future fortunes, and they told me that ere long we should be involved in war. They must have known of the defeat which we have lately sustained, and are therefore come to lend us their assistance. It was on this account that my sorrow was converted into joy."

The Eunuch and Chin Haou were delighted with Tŏ Gaou's story, and told him to go out at once and receive his visitors. He accordingly went forth, and welcomed them with great joy, for the pleasure experienced by friends when they meet surpasses all other occasions of happiness. They instantly followed him into the hall, and after they had been intro-

duced to Lew Kin, and had taken the seats belonging to them, Gaou asked them what had brought them to him.

"Since we parted from you," replied they, "we have been reduced to the condition of wretched orphans, for our father suddenly departed from the world. And yesterday we learned that you had been defeated by the troops of the Emperor, and compelled to take refuge in Këang Ning, where you were still in great peril. Our hearts were inflamed at the intelligence, and we are come forward to take vengeance on your enemies. What is their power?"

Gaou then related to them the particulars of the loss of the veil, and his subsequent defeat, and before the ladies could make any observation in reply, a soldier entered and said that the city was very vigorously attacked, and the soldiers all dispirited, on which the heroines left their seats, exclaiming, "Since the thieves show such boldness, we will go forth and engage them. We shall let them know our power, for not one shall be left."

This speech occasioned all the assembly the liveliest joy ; Lew Kin in particular congratulated himself on having two such energetic daughters-in-law, and immediately told Gaou to attend his wives and lead forth three thousand men to a sally. By the time the leaders had armed themselves, the troops were ready, and the gates being thrown open, forth they rushed. Show Jin was at the moment pushing the attack with determined vigour, but alarmed by such a bold movement on the part of the besieged, he looked at them as they approached, and perceived that the sally was headed by Gaou and two ladies of an uncommon appearance. Their movements were light as the flying clouds, and fleet as the darting of the nimble swallow ; fair they were as gems, and delicate as newly-opened flowers. Their eye-brows resembled the outlines of a hill in spring, and their waists were slender as the willow. Their hair, bound up on high, seemed aiming to meet the green clouds, and their embroidered armour flowed down below their ornamented girdles. Their appear-

ance rivalled the beauty of the fairies of the moon, and their martial spirit shone majestic as if they had belonged to those ladies who are seen in the clouds. As one looked at them his spirit became intoxicated, and his soul melted away.

The commander was alarmed and astonished at the sight, and tried in vain to find out whence the two heroines had come. He sent Joo Lung forward however to engage Tŏ Gaou, and his sister Kwei Yung with Wan Sew Chun to oppose the strangers, while he himself took a position in front to observe the battle.

But lo! volumes of dust began to roll and showers of sand to fly; the clouds seemed to descend, and the sun to become dark. The gongs thundered, the drums beat, and the artillery boomed, so as to shake the heavens. Men shouted, flags waved, and weapons flashed back the rays of light. Neither side gained, neither side lost, but whenever a sword was raised, or a spear thrust forth, death was sure to follow. A piteous sight it was to see the slaughtered bodies lying in heaps.

Chow Yung also had taken a similar position to watch the movements of the six principal combatants. Seeing that victory remained in doubt, after they had closed more than twenty times, he took out the fountain-calling veil, intending through its assistance to take the rebel general and his two female assistants prisoners. Accordingly he repeated as before the words of the charm, and in an instant foaming billows and green waves covered the ground and rolled towards the enemy. Tŏ Gaou perceived and knew the threatening danger, and fearing that his two wives would be caught in the snare, he called out to them loudly to give over fighting, and make their escape.

At the sound of his voice the two heroines looked round them, and perceiving the deluge of water which approached, and a general standing in front of the opposite army who waved a square of cloth, they knew at once that the cloth must be the fountain-calling veil, and in an instant the one who was engaged with Sew Chun abandoned her adversary, and urging her horse forward, brought out a red

pearl from her mouth, and threw it at the veil. No sooner did it hit the cloth than sparks of fire burst forth from it, and the whole veil was involved in flames. Yung endeavoured to extinguish them, but his efforts only made them burn the brighter, so that in a very short time the precious article was entirely consumed.

Its destruction inflamed the general's wrath, and drawing forth his rods of steel, he galloped forward to engage the lady, who on her part showed no signs of terror, but warded off his blows with a spear, and and then took a paper fan from her waist, which she opened out and struck him with. Such was the effect of the blow, that Yung felt as if a cold wind were passing through him. His bones became weak, and his hair stood on end; and unable to keep his ground, he fell down with a loud cry upon the saddle, turned his horse, and fled back to the camp.

Thus delivered from her adversary, the lady raised her fan again, and smote with it three times in the direction of the royal army, when in an instant the heavens were

covered with blackness, and darkness was upon the face of the earth; the light of the sun was extinguished, stones were hurled, sand was driven, and clouds of dust rolled towards Show Jin. The commander, in a great fright, wanted to sound the signal for retreat, but it was now so dark that the different quarters of the heavens could no longer be distinguished, and, notwithstanding all that he could do, his troops fell into great confusion, every man trying to save his own life. At the same time, Tŏ Gaou pressed upon them with the three thousand men who had sallied from the city, and drove them on the right and on the left as one would cut melons or vegetables. Multitudes trampled each other to death, nor did they find any relief till the rebels drew off their forces, after continuing the pursuit for more than twenty le.

After the enemy had retired, Show Jin proceeded to number his shattered forces, and found that he had lost more than thirty thousand men, and more than twelve of his officers. Nor was this all; for the

army had got completely dispirited by the movements of the two female rebel leaders, so that he was obliged to continue his retreat to Soo Chow, where he encamped, at about twelve le distant from the city.

Fearing further that the rebels would advance to besiege the city, he despatched letters announcing their distress in every direction, and calling for assistance. Having done this, he sent a messenger to acquaint his majesty with the particulars of the defeat. The Emperor and Leang Choo were exceedingly alarmed by the news, but instantly ordered ten thousand men and upwards of ten officers to go to Show Jin, to assist in making up his loss. At the same time they sent the commander word not to venture a second engagement with the rebels, and to endeavour, if he could, to find out who the two females were,—an order with which he instantly complied by sending messengers to prosecute the inquiry in the neighbourhood of Këang Ning.

In the mean time Tŏ Gaou had returned to that city with his victorious

troops, and Chin Haou and the Eunuch, having first rewarded the soldiers, proceeded amid the excitement of their joy to consult with the two ladies about the means to get possession of Soo Chow.

"That enterprise," said the ladies, "is not difficult. We have a plan here by which it can be reduced under our power in less than half a month, but we feel some reluctance to carry it into practice, as it will involve a considerable expenditure of life."

"What is that which you say, my daughters-in-law?" interrupted the Eunuch. "The ancients have said, 'If you wish to accomplish your object, life must not be regarded,' and also, 'The success of a general must be attended with ten thousand dry bones.' If you hesitate through compassion for a few lives, only think of our lives and those of our officers and soldiers. Moreover, you are bound to my son by the obligations and affections of your union; will you hesitate on account of a little feeling to exert yourselves on his behalf? Let me hear your plan."

Thus entreated, the ladies held down their heads for a short time in silent thought, and then exclaiming with a sigh, "These private affections! We can no longer hesitate!" they addressed themselves to all present. "To-morrow," said they, "we will advance with three thousand men as near as possible to the enemy, and arrange our encampments in such a way as to contrive to get their officers to enter it, when they will find it impossible to escape, and in less than ten days nothing of them will be left but some pus and blood. After that, not only will Soo Chow come within our power, but the whole empire will revert to us without our so much as raising our hands. In order to carry this plan into effect, however, it is necessary that we have in the first place forty pregnant women, and of pregnant cows, mares, and sheep, four hundred each."

The Eunuch, full of joy, declared at once that he would furnish them with all these requisites on the morrow, and after this the council broke up. Next day Lew

Kin despatched several individuals to go to the neighbouring hamlets and farms, and purchase the required number of the various animals. He then told Tŏ Gaou to take with him two hundred soldiers, and proceed to the subjected districts. There he was to issue a proclamation, commanding all the inhabitants to bring him a list of their pregnant women; promising a reward of one hundred taels of silver to every one who should comply, but threatening death, by beheading, to all who should out of private affection conceal the truth, and the same punishment also to the ten nearest adjoining families.

A period of three days was given for compliance with the above proclamation; and the ignorant people, not knowing what was the reason of it, and at the same time fearing that they would be killed in case of disobedience, had no resource but to comply and bring the lists. Some, indeed, perceiving that the thing was not good, refused obedience at the peril of their own lives, and private information being lodged

against them by some of the neighbours, who were afraid of being involved in the punishment, Gaou had them brought with all their families to the midst of the village assemblies, and there beheaded. Their heads were afterwards exposed to public view for a warning to others, and in consequence both the rich and the poor, though the latter were also partly influenced by a love of gain, came hastily forward to render the demanded information.

In less than three days Gaou had obtained a list of more than the required number, out of whom he chose forty, and proceeded to take them along with him back to the camp, saying, that he only wanted them to do some little work which was necessary to destroy the arts of the enemy. Some of the people believed that he spake truly, and allowed him to carry off their wives, others doubted about his intentions, but they could not help themselves. When they came to be separated, however, then were the affections which exist between husband and wife displayed. They clung to each other, and

refused to part, so that the noise of their sorrow and weeping resounded for several le. But the general was inexorable, and took them all with him.

When he reached the city, he proceeded to his wives to inform them of his success, and inquired what they wanted to do with the women. They merely told him, however, not to ask now, for he would know hereafter; on which reply he thought fit to be silent. In a little time longer the individuals who had been despatched to purchase the animals returned with the full quota of every kind; and then the heroines requested the Eunuch to be in readiness to move with all the forces, but two thousand, which might be left to keep Këang Ning. Their orders being immediately complied with, they forthwith commenced their march to Soo Chow, leading along with them the pregnant women and animals, nor did they pitch their camp until they had approached within five le of the enemy.

Wang Show Jin was holding a council of war in his tent at the time, and being

assailed amid his deliberations by a noise of artillery outside, he proceeded to arm himself, and went forth along with the officers present to see the state of affairs, imagining that the rebels had come forward to challenge them to an engagement. When he saw, however, that they had encamped at the distance of a few le, he summoned a thousand archers, who plied both the bow and the cross-bow, and stationed them at the entrance of the camp, to check any further progress of the enemy, assuring them that in case they were pressed, he himself would come to their relief, and threatening death by beheading to any of them who should disobey his orders; after which he retired into his tent.

As soon as the rebels had pitched their camp, Lew Kin took the seal of command, and gave it to his two daughters-in-law, that they might order the army at their pleasure. The ladies took the seal, paying homage to the Eunuch at the same time, and then proceeded to select a wild-looking piece of ground, where they caused a small

altar to be raised, which they ascended, in order to practise their magical arts, to write charms, and mutter imprecations. After some time they defined on the outside of the space the four cardinal and the four intermediate points, at each spot causing a gate to be erected. These gates had the respective names of prosperity, life, wounds, destruction, brightness, death, terror, and opening. At every gate a guard of one thousand men was posted, and then the forty pregnant women were brought forward; each was furnished with a sword or a spear, and a charm was affixed to the back of each, to prevent the injured spirits from flying away, and to cause them to wait to receive the orders of the enchantresses. The poor wretches were then separated into parties of five, and slaughtered before the separate gates, charms being written with their blood while it was yet warm, in order to be affixed to the posts and threshold. It was, indeed, a piteous sight to behold these innocent women, in their condition, meet with such a horrid fate.

After the women had been despatched, the animals were also divided into eight bodies, of one hundred and fifty each, and slaughtered by stabbing in the back, before the separate gates. The ladies then ordered the six Ting and the six Keă, military spirits, and the spirits whose business it is to comfort mourning families, to come and guard the gates, and lead the souls of the wronged women to demand the spirits of the enemy.

All these arrangements being made, the performers descended from the altar, and sent for Lew Kin and all the leaders, to see what they had done. The men having immediately responded to the summons, they waved for a moment a small flag, and cold winds began to play through the place, and spirits were heard weeping all around; heaps of weapons arranged themselves in proper order, and an exact guard was maintained over the gates. The whole defined space, indeed, assumed such an ugly and threatening aspect, that the spectators became loud in their expressions of admiration.

The Eunuch then asked what was the name of the disposition which they had formed. "This," replied they, "is called the disposition of golden gates and golden locks. Though a general have the ability to fly to Heaven, let him only once enter within this disposition, and he will not be able to get out again, but in ten days will be reduced to pus and blood. You must now send a challenge to the camp of your enemies, telling them to come and attack you here. You must propose also, that if within five days they can break up our disposition we shall bind ourselves and submit to punishment; but if they can make no impression upon our arrangement, that then they all, including the Emperor, shall come to us in chains to receive death."

The Eunuch instantly wrote the proposed challenge, and sent it to Wang Show Jin. As soon as he had read it, the commander perceived that the rebels had drawn themselves up in a manner to test their strength and skill with him, and though he would willingly have declined their challenge, he perceived that such a pro-

ceeding would furnish them with matter to ridicule him and his army, and encourage them to come forward to attack him. An engagement could not be avoided, and he resolved, therefore, at once to affix the sign of his acceptance to the challenge, and then to act as an examination of their arrangements would suggest. He accordingly wrote immediately upon the Eunuch's letter that he would attack him within three days, and sent it back.

Lew Kin no sooner received Show Jin's acceptance of his challenge, than he acquainted his daughters-in-law with it, and told them to take every caution in guarding their arrangements, lest the enemy should make a sudden attack. In the mean time, Show Jin had assembled his officers, and laid the matter before them. "The thief, Lew Kin," said he, "has formed an arrangement which he challenges us to attack. Now if there were only he and his companions we should have no occasion for anxiety, but this arrangement must be the work of those two female generals, with a magical appearance and magical

skill, and will prove very different from all ordinary dispositions. After our former defeat, moreover, I sent messengers to make inquiries about them in every direction, but they all returned without success, so that these new adversaries cause me no little uneasiness. What are we to do in the present case?"

"You need not be anxious," replied Chow Yung, "for though these females be possessed of some magical arts, their acquaintance with them cannot be very profound, else I should never have escaped on that occasion with my life, or at least without severe hurt. You and I had better dress ourselves to night as common soldiers, and steal towards the neighbourhood of their camp, when I will fly into the air, and see what kind of a disposition they have made. We can then act according to the nature of my discovery."

"Ofttimes 'tis hard on measures to resolve,
And sorrow comes upon the anxious mind."

CHAP. XLII.

> " That right does conquer wrong all history proves,
> And now 'twas seen. Vainly their magic arts
> Form'd the array. Destruction sudden came,
> And not the least for those so foully wrong'd."

The commander signified his approbation of Chow Yung's proposal, and accordingly the same night, at the second watch, they both disguised themselves, and approached the enemy's encampment. Having mounted a rising-ground, from which they could obtain a survey of the disposition, they perceived that a heavy darkness brooded over it, and that cold winds played through it. As to its form they discovered that it was furnished with eight gates, each of which was very strictly guarded by several hundred men. Show Jin was afraid that there might be some artful arrangement inside, and therefore told his companion to mount into the air, and examine whe-

ther there was any thing to be dreaded besides what appeared. The general at once complied, and taking out the cloud-girdle, and repeating the charm, he was in the sky in an instant, and looking down into the inclosed space, in which he could see nothing but as it were a slight hoar frost covering the ground, and about one thousand soldiers watching at every gate.

After making these observations, Yung returned, and reported them to his commander, who broke forth into a laugh, and exclaimed, "You were not mistaken when you said that they were not very profoundly acquainted with their magical arts;" and upon this they returned secretly to their own camp by the same way by which they had approached.

All the officers were in waiting to receive them, and inquired what disposition the rebels had made, on which Show Jin replied, that they had merely got the arrangement of eight gates, with which he was himself well acquainted, so that there was nothing to fear, and they would attack it to-morrow. The reply set their

minds at rest, and next day about seven o'clock, word was issued to the troops to take a good breakfast, and arm themselves in order to be in readiness to receive instructions.

In the mean time, the officers repaired in arms to the commander's tent to hear his dispositions. Show Jin then called Chow Yung and Kwŏ Joo Lung, the leaders of the van, to lead each three thousand men to attack the enemies encampment. They were to break in at the gate of opening, where many yellow flags were displayed, and rush across it to the east side, and issue forth by the gate of life, over which there waved a red flag. They were to take particular care, and not mistake their way so as to approach a different gate, lest they should be taken in some snare, and Jin himself would lead the main army to their support.

When the two generals had departed, he next called Wan Jin Teih, Fei Heung, with their sisters, and told them to lead four thousand men, and break into the encampment by the gate of brightness,

where a number of green flags were displayed, and then to rush across it, and make their exit by the gate in the east, with a red flag waving over it; after which they were to effect a junction with Yung and Joo Lung, and return to their own camp.

Having despatched these two parties, the commander proceeded, along with Le Lung, Kwei Sëën, Kwei Yung, and the rest of the officers, to marshal the main army, and put it in motion to support the attack.

In the mean time Chow Yung and Wan Jin Teih with their troops advanced to the encampment together, and on approaching it, separated into two bodies, and dashed in by the gates of opening and life. No opposition was made to their entrance, for the two ladies, who had seen their advance, and taken their station at the gates, each grasping a precious sword in her left hand, and a five coloured flag in her right, stepped aside as they drew near, and caused all the gates to be opened. No sooner had all passed through, however, than they gave the flags a wave, and in

an instant three discharges of signal guns were heard all round, and the gates were shut and firmly locked. This done, they muttered a few sentences, and flourished their swords round towards the outline of their arrangement, and forthwith artillery began to roar, and drums and trumpets to thunder. Flags also were waved, rows of spears and swords were displayed, and shouts seemed to rend the heavens. Stones began to roll about, and clouds of sand flew in all directions, as if the heavens had been falling, and the earth bursting. Black clouds covered the sun, poisonous mists darkened the air, and the aspect of the place became so changed, that it looked like a black and windy cave. Joo Lung and the others were filled with alarm. When they first entered, the sun was shining brightly, but in a minute or two, when the guns began to be discharged and the drums and trumpets to sound, then they felt cold winds flying about, and thickly floating vapours of slaughter, while spirits howled and cried, horses neighed, and men shouted all round them. Dark-

ness soon added its terrors to the scene, and then an immense number of phantom soldiers of strange aspect made their appearance to stop their movements. The wronged souls of women, attended by boys and girls grasping in their hands swords and spears, came forward as if to murder them, all disfigured with fresh blood, weeping most bitterly, and running hither and thither. Ghosts that console mourning families, dressed in flax, and carrying mourning staves, were also there, all fierce, and multitudes of horses, cows and sheep, some large and some small, with knives and spears sticking in their backs, rushed about in every direction.

The troops of Chow Yung were driven about like stars by these wronged spirits. They wanted to force their way out, but there was no gate by which they could issue; they then attempted to retire by the gate through which they had entered, but it was so dark that they could not distinguish the east from the west. To add to their consternation, no troops came up to their support, so that they remained in-

closed within the gates in the greatest distress. The various incantations, however, could only annoy them, and could not really do them any hurt, and Joo Lung and Chow Yung observing this, made several efforts to collect their soldiers into one place, where they allowed the spirits to surround them like an iron ring, and stood motionless and somewhat at ease. The commander could do nothing to relieve them. As he was advancing with the main army towards the rebel lines, he suddenly heard the noise of the guns which had been discharged as we have related, and urged his men forward, supposing that the attacking parties and the enemy were engaged inside the gates. When he came up to the place, however, the appearance of the disposition was altogether changed. When he had formerly seen it, the spaces between the gates were not so closely guarded but that there was room in many places for a horse to ride across them, but now the soldiers were so thickly crowded in them, that a needle could not find admission. Not a single

gate, moreover, was to be seen, and a noise was heard inside of spirits howling and weeping, women crying and men lamenting, soldiers hurrying about, and horses prancing, which threatened to rend the heavens and tear the earth, as if a thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry had been engaged together. He remained in expectation from twelve o'clock till two, and from two till five, but when he saw that not one of the attacking parties made his escape, nothing could exceed his distress. He ran about hither and thither, fuming and sighing, unable to devise any plan of action, and at last, when he heard the cold winds whistling without intermission, and saw the vapours of slaughter continually floating upwards, he became as if he had been dead.

He was relieved, however, by the appearance of Chow Yung descending from the clouds. That hero, after using every means to effect his escape from the enchanted ground in vain, suddenly remembered that he had got the cloud-girdle with him, and half hoping, half doubting, he bound it

about his head, and repeated the charm. In an instant he was mounting in the air as before, and flew with the utmost speed towards the commander's army. It was well for him that he did so, for his flight was discerned by the two ladies, who instantly discharged several arrows after him, but it was too late. He had already got beyond their reach.

Fearing that the other officers whom they had enclosed might also know how to fly, the enchantresses repeated some new charms, by which they took the net of Heaven and earth, and enclosed with it quite securely the whole of their lines.

In the mean time Chow Yung had flown directly to the commander, and acquainted him with all that had befallen the troops after they entered the gates. When he had finished his narration, Show Jin then perceived the dangerous foes he had to deal with, and said to Yung, "Although these spirits cannot inflict any wounds, yet as the men are inclosed within the place, they will soon become hungry. What is to be done against such an evil? For the

present you had better take a quantity of dry provisions about your person, and fly back this very night. This will suffice them for the mean time, and give us leisure to concert other measures."

In accordance with this proposal, and furnished with the requisite articles, the general flew back the same night to the scene of his captivity, but when he attempted to descend into the space, he found it impossible; the whole encampment was as if it had been covered with plates of copper, and there was not a a single hole by which he could find admission, so that he was obliged to return in sorrow to Show Jin, and acquaint him with the failure of the attempt.

The news increased the commander's trouble, and he determined to retreat to the city, and acquaint his majesty with this new aspect of affairs, for it was plain that if the army remained where it was it would be exposed to the attacks of the rebels. He therefore appointed Chow Yung and Le Lung to bring up the rear, while he himself led off the rest of the army as

privately as possible. In a short time they all reached the city; and, after seeing the troops encamped, Show Jin only waited for the morning to enter and acquaint the Emperor with all the circumstances which had obliged him to retreat.

His majesty, with Leang Choo and the other officers in attendance, were thrown into great alarm by his report, and consulted, but in vain, for some plan to break the enchantment, and rescue their captive friends. In the midst of their deliberations an officer of the middle army entered, and, kneeling down, reported to his majesty that general Ho Chin Pang had arrived with a body of troops, and wanted to be admitted into the city and to an audience. Delighted with the intelligence, Ching Tĭh instantly gave orders that he should be introduced; and accordingly Pang entered, leaving his forces outside.

"How did you know that I was hard pressed here?" was the first question that the Emperor addressed to him.

"After your majesty's departure," replied he, "when I perceived there was no

news of you for a considerable time, I went frequently to pray to the gods, and to inquire of the diviners for intelligence of your movements. While I was thus occupied, I happened to observe one day upon the streets a priest of Taou, in his feather garments and rush shoes, of a clear and strange aspect, selling divinations in a shop. I went up to him to make my usual inquiries, when he took me apart to a retired place, and informed me that you were hard pressed by magical arts in Soo Chow, and told me to proceed to your protection, and to guard you back to the capital. On receiving this information I lost no time, but proceeded to collect whatever troops I could, and have come hither to render you my homage."

When Wang Show Jin heard Chin Pang make mention of magical arts, his own suspicions about their female adversaries and their encampment were revived, and he hastily exclaimed, "Without doubt the priest was right; our adversaries are not human. But since he knew that you were hard pressed here from such a cause,

he must be well acquainted with all arts of enchantment. Had your majesty not better send Ho Chin Pang to invite him here."

Before his majesty had time to reply, Chin Pang observed that the priest had vanished into thin air immediately after giving him the above information, but had left a letter with him which was to be opened after he had seen the Emperor. "I now have it with me," said he; "will your majesty look at it?"

Ching Tĭh instantly told him to produce and open it, on which Pang drew it out from his breast, and opening it, there were found a few lines of small characters to the following effect: —

"Do not be distressed; do not be sorrowful. There is an old cave on Tsae Hea Hill in Ying Chow fanned by the cold winds, and over which the bright moon serves him for a boat. Remember this; and quickly send there for the priest with the double surname Gow Yang, and the title Yun Yow. I advise my prince that he need not cherish sorrow, for the

magical arts will disappear on my arrival."

When the letter had been read the Emperor addressed himself to all present, and said, "This makes it plain that the Taouist priest was a genius with the double surname of Gow Yang, and the title of Yun Yow, and that he now dwells on the Tsae Hea Hill. If we call him down he will surely be able to destroy all these enchantments. The only difficulty is, that I don't know where the Tsae Hea Hill is."

He then questioned them all, but they professed themselves equally ignorant. At last Show Jin called the chief of their guides, and inquired whether there were any hill in the neighbourhood called Tsae Hea.

Thus interrogated, the man knelt down, and said, "About thirty le from this there is a high hill in the south-west which is called Tsae Hea. At the top of it there is an old cave, open to the clear winds, where I have heard that a self-refining genius, named Gow Yang, resided more than a hundred years ago; but now it is

quite overgrown with trees, and haunted by wolves, tigers, and leopards, so that it is seldom visited by any body."

On hearing this account his majesty exclaimed with joy, "Without doubt Gow Yang is there," and instantly ordered the guide to lead the way thither, followed by Chin Pang and Chow Yung, who were furnished with plenty of gold and silver and precious articles, and a letter from the Emperor himself requesting Gow Yang to come down the hill.

> "A hundred gods did help his majesty,
> And generals in their qualities complete."

CHAP. XLIII.

> "The atrocious crime soon met its just reward,
> And sweet deliverance to the captives came.
> A thousand vengeful knives the genii pierc'd,
> And Heaven, full bright, display'd its holy laws."

In performance of their commission the two brothers and their guide proceeded to the Tsae Hea Hill. Clear were its peaks, and crystal the mountain streams. Tall firs bordered their path, and old cypresses which emulated the skies. Flocks of cranes were flying about, and parrots playing with each other on every side. On the very highest peak they thought they could descry the appearance of a house built of stone; nor were they deceived, for when they drew near they found there was really such a dwelling, with the words "Cave of the cool winds" written upon the door.

Chin Pang at once exclaimed that they would certainly find Gow Yang within,

and the party halted while the guide knocked at the door. In an instant there appeared a boy with a brush in his hand, to inquire who they were, when the guide replied that the general Ho Chin Pang had come to obtain an audience with the sage. The boy went in with the intelligence, and quickly reappeared with a message from his master requesting them to enter. On this, they entered the house, and Gow Yang, with a countenance like that of a boy, and hair as white as the plumage of a stork, after he had pointed them to seats and caused tea to be served up, began to inquire on what business they had come to his uncultivated hill. Chow Yung, in reply, informed him of the encampment which the two females had formed, and the manner in which the attacking parties had been involved in it. "Now," said he, "we are indebted to you for the information you have given us concerning the character of the arts by which we have been assailed, and his majesty intreats that you will come down from your hill and destroy their disposition."

With this he took the Emperor's letter, and the various presents, and presented them to the genius, but Gow Yang, after he had read the letter, declined the invitation, saying, "An inhabitant of the hills and wilds, like me, knows not the arts of war and tactics. I will trouble you to report so."

The three messengers, however, continued to urge him. "If you do not come to our help," said they, "what will become of all those lives?" and he, seeing that they were sincere in their wishes, at last gave his consent to go, but declined accepting any of the gold or other articles, which he told them to reserve, in order to reward the soldiers. He then gave strict orders to his boy to watch the cave, and not ramble down the hill; after which he attended the three men back to the city.

As soon as their approach was discovered it was reported to the Emperor, who was much delighted, and went forth with all the civil and military officers to meet them, and on coming up to them he took Gow Yang by the hand, and in

that way proceeded, together with him, to his own residence. There they sat down in the hall as host and guest, and after they had partaken of tea, his majesty begged him to save the lives of the officers and men who were detained within the rebel lines as prisoners, and inquired from what form the two female leaders had passed into their present shape. "These," said the old genius, "were foxes on Prince-flower Hill, and after several thousand years of refining they attained a human form. They have, however, been overcome by lewd desires so as to slaughter multitudes of people, and cruelly to put to death pregnant women. Heaven above is enraged, and cannot bear any longer with their sins, but dooms them to destruction. I will, therefore, go forth and engage them in battle, and cut them in pieces to satisfy the demands of Heaven.

"By so doing I violate indeed the conditions of my retirement, and must postpone the completion of my refinement for a kalpa,

but I cannot hesitate to exert my strength on behalf of your majesty."

He then related, in the hearing of all, the manner in which the enchantresses had slain the pregnant women, and the various animals, an account which filled them with pity and wrath. Chow Yung having inquired how it was that while he had been able to fly out of the encampment he had not been able to find his way into it again, the old man pressed his thumb against his fingers, and explained. "This," said he, "was owing to their using the art of the net of Heaven and earth. When I go myself to destroy their arrangement, it will be necessary for me to change myself into a fly, and to enter by boring through the ground underneath the net. It is fortunate that you have that cloud-girdle, for I will give you a gourd which you can take up with you when you fly into the air. As soon as you perceive that I have entered their arrangement, and hear fierce shouting inside, you must take the gourd, and shake it three times, crying each time with a loud voice, 'Fire,

come!' and in an instant their net will be consumed, and the light of heaven displayed to those within.

"Should the enchantresses come to pursue, I have here three charms, which you have only to throw at them, to cause them to fall to the earth."

Having thus given Chow Yung his orders, he delivered to him the gourd and the charms, and then called for Chin Pang. "You," said he to him, "must have the troops under your own command in readiness, and when you see that I have destroyed the enchantment, and am engaged with the two females, you must find your way behind the rebels' lines, and cut down wood in order to block up their retreat. Should the females come there flying, here are three charms and two spiritual cords. You have only to throw the charms at them, when they will instantly resume their original forms. You can then bind them with the cords, and bring them to me."

He next told Sung Paou and Chang Chang Chun to lead each one thousand

men, and to surround the enemy's camp, in order to intercept their flight, and make them prisoners.

Having given these orders, he turned to the commander, and said, that he had better divide the army into three bodies, after he himself and Chow Yung had gone, and advance with them to attack the rebels' camp, assuring him of a complete victory.

After all these arrangements had been made, Gow Yang took leave of the Emperor, and armed himself. His armour consisted of a sword of peach-wood hung by his side, a flag for brushing souls which he carried in his right hand, and a large deer's tail to drive the dust, which he bore in his left. Thus accoutered, he went forth along with Chow Yung, and proceeded towards the scene of action.

While they were yet a considerable distance from it, he told his companion to stop, and began to repeat a charm. He then gave his body a shake, and in an instant he had assumed the form of a fly, which made its way forthwith through the ground underneath the net. When he

had got inside he perceived the cold winds flying about, and looked round for the imperial troops, but could not discover where they were on account of the thick darkness which brooded over the place. He therefore drew forth the peach-wood sword, and, resuming his natural form, rushed forward with a shout. Dreadful alarm seized upon Kwŏ Joo Lung and Wan Jin Teih, as well as upon their troops, for they could not tell what the noise meant, and were besides exceedingly enfeebled by having had nothing to eat for three days. They forced themselves, however, to draw together and assume a posture of defence.

In the mean time Chow Yung had addressed himself to the performance of his part of the attack. No sooner did he hear the shout of the genius than he repeated the words of his own charm, and mounted into the air, where he took the gourd, as he had been instructed, and shook it three times, shouting every time, "Fire, come!" After the third shake, a stream of fire rushed forth from the gourd down upon

the ènchanted net, which became enveloped in flames, and was consumed in an instant, so that Yung could see his own troops beneath standing apart in two bodies, one in the east and the other in the west. He forthwith called out to Joo Lung and Fei Heung, who headed the two parties, to follow the old genius, and force their way out of the inclosure. Roused by his words, the troops all looked up, and perceiving that it was Chow Yung, they summoned all their strength and spirits, and attached themselves to Gow Yang.

The genius proceeded with hasty steps to lead them forth, but was intercepted by the magical soldiers and the souls of the dead, who took up a position in their front. On this he gave several sweeps with his soul-brushing flag, and led the souls of the women and all the animals on one side, where he stuck the flag on the ground, and they immediately vanished. The only thing to be perceived being a cloud of black vapour, which moved round and round. Having thus got rid of these opponents, he raised the peach-wood sword,

and opened a bloody path for himself and his followers. The soldiers, however, who guarded the gates were determined that their prisoners should not escape so easily, and, advancing to intercept them, commenced an obstinate battle. It was fortunate for the weakened troops that Wang Show Jin came up just at this moment with the main army in three bodies to their rescue. The rebels' lines were speedily broken, leaving the commander at liberty to direct his forces against the large camp of Tŏ Gaou.

As soon as the deliverance of the prisoners had been effected, Gow Yang turned back into the encampment of the two enchantresses, brandishing his good sword that for a thousand years had been employed to destroy the wicked. Some he cut down, some he beheaded. The six Ting and six Kêă spirits, and those whose business it is to console mourning families, were all either destroyed by the flames or by the sword, so that the encampment was completely purified of them.

Nothing could exceed the rage of the

two females at seeing such an unexpected frustration of their plans. One of them rushed in to engage Gow Yang, and the other, after repeating some charm, flew up into the air to attack Chow Yung. As soon as Yung saw her approach, he threw at her one of the charms, with which the genius had furnished him, and no sooner did she see it than she became alarmed, and fell down several feet. Recovering herself however, she brought up a red pearl from her stomach, and threw it at him, but Yung warded it off with another charm, so that it only gave a clash, and fell harmless on the earth. Thus baffled, she became furious, and rushed at him, when he threw the last charm, the effects of which she could not resist, and fell down from the air with a cry.

As soon as Gow Yang saw her condition, he came running up to behead her with the peach-wood sword. Her sister, however, pursued hastily after him, and intercepted his blow with her silver spear, on which the genius turned to fight with her, and a sharp contest ensued. After

changing about ten blows, the enchantress took out her paper fan, and shook it several times, when Gow Yang was assailed by cold winds, and a shower of stones and sand. Nothing daunted, he waved his deer's tail for some time, crying, "Go! go!" and hardly were the words uttered when the sand began to blow back upon its raiser. In great consternation she caused it to be still, and just at the moment her sister came up in turn to her relief, and threw with uplifted arm a flag at the genius. Gow Yang assumed the appearance of fright, and ran off, hotly pursued by them both. Bending his flight in the direction of Ho Chin Pang, he called out to him to throw his charms. Chin Pang on this came hastily forward, and threw one of them at the two fugitives, who appeared frightened, and attempted to fly back. Seeing this, he threw the second, when they both became motionless as if they had been bound, not only not able to run off, but even incapable of moving their hands or their feet. While they were in this condition, Pang

threw the third charm at their heads, on which a sudden clap was heard all round, and there stood before him quite still two foxes, with their tongues lolling out and their teeth all covered with foam. Taking the two spiritual cords, he advanced and bound them, after which he gave them in charge to some of the soldiers to lead back to the camp.

Just as these potent enemies had been secured, there drew near a body of men in flight. Looking at them steadily for a little, Chin Pang perceived that it was Lew Kin and his associates, and understood that they had been defeated by Wang Show Jin. He therefore called upon his men to advance and intercept their retreat, and at the same time he shouted out to the rebels that they only wanted to take Lew Kin, Tŏ Gaou, and Chin Haou, and that the rest might save their lives by submission. These words sounded in the ears of the multitude like a pardon, and as they knelt at once begging to be allowed to surrender, Pang caused them to be conducted off the field, and

put behind his own ranks, while he moved forwards to catch their leaders. These were aware of their danger, and, abandoning their horses, attempted to make their escape on foot. They were stopped however in a little, and seized by Sung Paou and his associates, who immediately carried them to the camp.

The same night Wang Show Jin despatched Chin Pang and Chow Yung with a body of the rebels who had surrendered, and five thousand men besides, towards Kċang Ning, that by displaying the Eunuch's flag, and under cover of the darkness, they might effect the capture of the city. It happened as was desired. On approaching the wall the rebels called out to open the gate, which was done without suspicion, when the troops rushed in and put the garrison to the sword, and the same night news of their success was despatched by the leaders to the commander-in-chief.

After the destruction of the magical encampment the wronged souls of the pregnant women continued to assemble in

the same place. Gow Yang was much distressed at the sight, but understanding the reason, he sent a letter to Këang Ning telling Ho Chin Pang to issue a proclamation, informing the people of the fate of their wives, and requesting them to go and collect their bones while Gow Yang was at Soo Chow, and could point them all out separately. Chin Pang instantly obeyed his instructions; and when the people heard how their wives had been wronged they repaired to the general, and intreated him to lead them to Gow Yang, and beseech him to point out to them the several remains. On this Pang left merely a garrison of one thousand men in Këang Ning under the command of captain Wang Peu, and led all the rest of his forces and the suppliant people to the camp of Wang Show Jin.

Arriving there, he and Chow Yung had an interview with the genius, the commander, and the other officers, and informed them how the people had come to intreat Gow Yang to point out to them the bones of their wives, that they might

inter them properly. Gow Yang assented to the request with joy, and going forth led the people to the late enchanted field. It was a sorrowful sight to behold the white bones lying together in a heap; but the genius pointed them all out one by one to the various claimants, who were overcome with grief, and wept over the remains till the voice of their sorrow was heard for several le.

After he had accomplished this business, Gow Yang ordered the two foxes to be brought to the spot, and then told the people to take each a sharp knife, and satisfy their rage by cutting them to pieces. The men needed no second bidding, but gnashed their teeth as they advanced to the work, and in a few minutes reduced the two bodies to minute fragments. When this punishment had been inflicted, the genius drew out the flag which he had stuck in the earth, and the wronged souls immediately disappeared after the coffins, which the people carried off with many expressions of their gratitude. When all this business was ended,

Show Jin caused the prisoners to be secured in proper carriages, and gave orders to the various generals to lead the army back to the city. He then sent word to the Emperor of the various particulars of their success, when his majesty came forth attended by all the officers of the city to receive the genius. Having conducted him to his residence, and thanked him for all the trouble he had undergone in the conflict, his majesty ordered his own cook to prepare a simple repast for him, and at the same time he caused numbers of oxen and horses to be killed to reward the toils of the soldiers.

Next day Gow Yang proposed to take his leave. The Emperor and all the generals earnestly persuaded him to remain, but it was of no avail. Neither could they induce him to accept any of the gold and precious articles which were tendered. Chow Yung seeing that he was bent upon going, returned to him the gourd which had been of such signal service. Gow Yang took it, and immediately proceeded down the steps, accompanied by all present, but

as soon as he reached the open air, clouds were seen to rise beneath his feet, and he disappeared treading on the air.

After he was gone his majesty gave a feast, and congratulated all the officers upon their merits. In the midst of the entertainment, Leang Choo presented to him the excellent pleasure of the Empress-dowager, and entreated him to lead the army to the capital. The Emperor assented to the request, and instantly ordered the various officers of the neighbourhood, and the two governors of provinces who were present, to repair to their offices again until he returned to the capital, when he would issue rewards and promotions for them. They instantly returned thanks, and began to lead off their troops.

When they had gone, his majesty sent messengers to bring Le Fung and all her family, and place them along with the family of Han He; and the guardian having inquired who Le Fung was, Ching Tĭh related to him in a somewhat disguised style the manner of his acquaint-

ance with her. Leang Choo felt very dissatisfied with the account, and would have remonstrated, but he perceived that it was too late for any interference, and moreover, Le Lung had displayed signal merit in the late transactions. He was, therefore, silent; and in a few days the lady arrived, and all was ready for marching. The Emperor, therefore, raised his flag with the title "Choo Show, generalissimo of all the armies of the empire," written upon it; and commanded the march to be commenced with songs of triumph. He himself reflected on his re-entry into the capital amid such bustle, so different from the style in which he had departed from it, attended by a single officer.

"In fortune's hour all dangers we forget,
And while youth lasts on pleasures all are bent."

CHAP. XLIV.

" Heaven orders all things by its will,
And vain the schemer's crafty skill,
But man can never know content,
More, more, to gain his soul is bent;
Ruin he brings upon his head,
Ruin that he himself has fed."

As our story approaches to a conclusion, we must endeavour to develope the fate of the several individuals that have been introduced in the course of it to the reader's notice. Leaving his majesty, therefore, for a little, we shall revert to his adopted son, Chow Yuen, who, after taking leave of his uncle, as has been related, proceeded on his journey to the capital. He arrived there after a considerable time, and as he was walking about in the streets, he heard the people talking about their Emperor, how he had privately gone to Këang Nan, and in his rambling over several foo had

degraded a good many of the officers, both civil and military; how afterwards he had gone from Nan Laon village to see a kêung flower, and been attacked by the lord Chin Haou, and the eunuch Lew Kin, with his adopted son, Tŏ Gaou, and besieged in Soo Chow; and how, through the bravery of the soldiers that hastened from every quarter to his relief, he had succeeded in taking prisoners all the traitors, and was now far advanced on his return to the court with his victorious army, which made the way resound with songs of triumph.

Chow Yuen was exceedingly delighted with the news; and, after looking for a lodging, procured himself a suit of new clothes, in which to go out and meet his majesty.

The Emperor came on in great state. Ho Chin Pang and Chow Yung advanced first with the van, to lead the way, and after them came the main army, arranged so as best to display its majesty. A number of great officers were also in immediate attendance, to guard the person of the

Emperor, who was mounted on horseback, and rode slowly on, grasping the reins. Nothing could exceed the magnificence of the scene — flags obscured the sun, and over them a spirit of slaughter seemed to float; the glittering points of the spears and swords shone and moved like flakes of falling snow; and then appeared a number of officers, like wolves scouring over the mountains and plains, and soldiers as fierce as tigers, with swords and pendent bows, guarding the carriage containing the prisoners. It was a time of bustle and excitement, and men and women, both from the capital and all around it, came forth in crowds to witness the array.

His majesty having fully gratified his natural disposition, sat upon his horse with a bold and complacent air. Wherever he approached, the civil and military officers all came out to welcome him, and in this way he arrived at the capital, where of course they thronged towards him in greater numbers.

Chow Yuen was among the gazing mass, and was soon recognised by Chow Yung,

as he advanced leading the way for the Emperor. The general instantly rode back and informed his majesty, who told him to bring Yuen to see him. The young man received the order with readiness, and followed Yung till they drew near to his royal father's horse, when he went forward and did obeisance to him. His majesty then gave him in charge to the president of the board of rites, who took him off the field to have him instructed in the various observances befitting his rank.

In the mean time, the Emperor called for the commander of the five camps, and told him to see that the army was safely encamped without the city. This done, he hastened on to enter the capital, attended by all the officers. Among them was Mă Wăn Ching, who was astonished at the sight of his brother-in-law Wang Show Jin. Full of joy at finding him still among the living, he eagerly advanced to salute him. The meeting occasioned both the liveliest pleasure, though shaded somewhat by recollections of sorrow; and after they had spent some time in mutual ex-

planations, they moved forward hand-in-hand in the cavalcade.

Thus escorted, his majesty reached the palace, and at once hastened within to pay reverence to his mother, and to intreat her pardon for his rambles. The Empress was delighted with his reappearance, but managed to give him a lecture of some length, after which she told him to go to the hall of audience, to attend to the public business, and arrange the appointments of the various officers, great and small, with strict attention to their several merits, in order to display the excellence of his imperial principles.

In obedience to her orders, his majesty repaired to the court-hall. Arrived there, he first told the governor of the five camps to distribute the army at his discretion, till he should find leisure to dispense rewards among the soldiers. He next ordered that the two ladies should be carried into the palace to see the Empress-dowager, but upon this Leang Choo advanced to the throne, to remonstrate. "The lady Sung," said he, "is the daughter of a

family which has for several generations produced eminent and loyal officers, so that I can stand security for her; but the lady Le, though deserving of your choice on account of her virtue, yet has sold wine before the furnace like Chŏ Wăn, and multitudes of the common people, as they passed by, have looked upon her, as a willow by the side of a stream, or a flower hanging over a wall. Since you wish to have her in the palace, you had better ask who will stand security for her."

On this his majesty called out, "Here is my lady Le, which, of all you nobles, will stand security for her?" but not one of all uttered a word.

Their silence roused his majesty's indignation. "If none of you," cried he, "will stand security for her, I will do it myself."

On hearing this speech, however, they all advanced forward, and said: "The words of the high guardian are right, every one of them, and if your majesty now call the lady thus rashly into your palace, none of us will be able to repose confidence in

her. In our humble opinion, the best plan will be to erect another palace of retirement within the city, where you can keep her for a year or a half. If during all that time she conduct herself with propriety, you can then receive her into the palace. We beseech our lord to listen to our advice."

The Emperor perceived the reasonableness of their counsel, and instantly issued the requisite commands to the president of the board of works. This matter settled, he transmitted an order to enter the hall of audience to all the officers who were in waiting, who at once complied with the summons, and coming in knelt before the golden steps. His majesty permitted them to rise and be seated, after which he told some of the life-guards to bring in the traitors. When they had been produced, he reproached them for their ingratitude to his kindness, and then commanded that the Eunuch and his adopted son should be beheaded in the public market place, while Chin Haou was permitted to strangle himself with a piece of red silk. When they

were about to conduct Tŏ Gaou out of the hall, he recognised Chow Yung, and called out to him, "Brother, Chow Yung, brother, Chow Yung, will you not think of my righteousness in returning you the piece of money that day, and now save my life?" Yung, however, replied, "How is it that you can think of a brother with a different surname, when you did not think of your true married wife," and fiercely ordered them to carry him forth. When the sentence had been carried into execution, the heads of the traitors were hung up to public view over the gates of the capital.

After he had thus punished his traitorous foes, the Emperor proceeded to reward his friends. Chow Yung was entitled kingdom-settler prince; Leang Choo, kingdom-protector high guardian, with the regulation at once of the court, and of the general administration; Wang Show Jin was appointed high guardian of the crown prince, and high chancellor of Wăn Yëen Hall, in which he was to reside. Tsin Fei Heung received his

father's office, and was likewise ordered to collect afresh the bones of his parents, and inter them with the rites due to the highest rank of subjects. His majesty also permitted the children of all those officers who had been put to death through Lew Kin's wickedness, to take the Eunuch's head and present it during sacrifice before their parents tombs, in order to comfort their loyal souls, and on the day of this ceremony, he himself selected an appropriate composition, and sent Wang Show Jin to read it for him at the tombs. Those of the various officers, who had faithfully reproved him, that were now dead, were, notwithstanding, honoured with promotion, and all obtained a place in the temple dedicated to the merits of the loyal, and their descendants succeeded to their offices. The others that had retired to obscurity, or been banished to the borders, were recalled to fill their former places, and in a little they came in numbers to the capital. At the same time Wang Show Jin's family came to rejoin the guardian, and the wandering officer found himself again at home.

The court and the country were filled with admiration at the wisdom and justice displayed in these measures by his majesty, and could not help beholding the way in which royal Heaven had favoured the loyal and the filial, while the traitors had drawn upon themselves destruction.

The Emperor had now leisure to attend to the friends whom he had newly acquired. Kwŏ Joo Lung and Wan Jin Tcih were appointed generals in constant attendance upon the court. Han He was entitled imperial father-in-law, and Sung Kin, Sung Paou, and Le Lung imperial brothers-in-law.

After the business of these rewards and promotions had been concluded, his majesty began to reflect that, with the exception of Ho Chin Pang, all the officers who had lately signalized themselves, were young and unmarried. He determined therefore to see them all united in marriage, and commenced by giving Seaou Lėėn to Chow Yung. Mei Yeen, the daughter of Tsin Ting Yun, was given to Kwŏ Joo Lung, and Joo Lung's two sisters, Kwei Sėėn and Kwei Yung, were united respectively

to Wan Jin Teih and Le Lung. Sung Kin was already married, but his brother Sung Paou being yet unengaged, Wan Jin Teih presented a petition to the Emperor, which was accepted, that his sister Sew Chun might be betrothed to him. His majesty next sent an order to Tsëen Tsing to bring his family to the capital, and when he had arrived, contracted his daughter Chun Go to Tsin Fei Heung. As soon as these orders were transmitted to the various parties, seeing that his majesty acted as middle man, and gave houses to all within the capital, the flowery candles were lighted, and the unions formed, and the various families remained afterwards in the neighbourhood of the Emperor, forming intermarriages, enjoying the highest happiness and repose.

The next arrangement of his majesty was to send a large quantity of gold and silver, and other precious things, to the Tsae Hea Hill, to show his gratitude to the genius Gow Yang. He likewise wrote with his own pencil a paper entitled "The Cool Winds Cave," in which he nominated it the pearly cave of

the distinguished Taouist and the true genius, and granted to it the whole of the Tsae Hea Hill.

After he had despatched a messenger on this business, Ching Tĭh sent to the board of rites for Chow Yuen. The youth made his appearance, and saluted his majesty, kneeling three times and knocking his head nine times on the ground. The Emperor then confirmed him in the rank of his adopted son, and appointed him a member of the imperial family. He also promoted his mother Wang to the highest rank of ladies, and his wife to the second rank, and ordained that the same honours should be carried back into the family for three generations. Yuen then bowed his head again in expression of his gratitude for these favours, when his majesty told him to rise, and seated him by his side. The various officers who were present were surprised at the proceeding, and came forward to inquire who the young man was that was so highly honoured; on which the Emperor informed them of the incident in his travels which had led to his

acquaintance with Yuen. On learning that he was the monarch's adopted son, they all approached to pay him reverence, when Yuen left his seat and returned their courtesies.

Order being restored, Ching Tĭh asked him whether he had carried the letter with which he had intrusted him to Tsaou Kėĕ, and whether the marriage had been concluded with his daughter or not. Yuen related to him the message which he had received from Tseu Kėŭh, and the other incidents, which inflamed his majesty to such a degree that he struck the table, crying out, "The villain Seang! to despise my imperial decree! The laws of the kingdom cannot bear him." With these words he ordered Chow Yuen to be furnished with a band of soldiers, and twenty personal attendants. "I will also give you," said he, "one of the swords belonging to the princes, with which you can return to visit your ancestor's tombs, and celebrate your nuptials with the young lady. If any one offers you any opposition, you can at once behead him without

waiting to refer the matter to me. When you have concluded your marriage you must then bring your mother and wife to the capital."

The young man bowed his head to the ground as he received the sword, after which the Emperor told a eunuch to lead him into the palace, to see the Empress-dowager and the Empress. The two ladies were much pleased with him, and gave him many presents of gold and other things. After he had taken leave of them, Yuen returned to the court to bid his royal father farewell. He then parted from all the officers, and proceeded with an imperial decree to the board of war. Being furnished there with a body of five hundred soldiers, he caused the gong to be sounded, and commenced his march directly towards Hang Chow. After Chow Yuen had gone, his majesty commissioned several ministers to find out the officers who had distinguished themselves in the various encounters with the rebels, and raise them to higher rank. The common soldiers were also all entered in a

volume, and rewarded according to their merits. Those who had fallen on the field were graciously admitted to the 'Temple for distinguishing the loyal,' and their children were appointed to fill their places perpetually. Orders were at the same time issued that no taxes should be levied for one year on any of the people who had been harassed and plundered by the rebels, and the same immunity was granted to the inhabitants of the various districts over which his majesty had rambled.

The Emperor next recalled to mind the provincial villains and crafty officers whom he had met with in Kèáng Nan, and he determined to examine narrowly into their several cases, and exhibit his determination to secure the repose of his people by delivering them from all oppression. He therefore appointed an especial commission, consisting of Wang Show Jin, Mă Wăn Ching, Wan Jin Teih, and Kwŏ Joo Lung, to take prisoners T'ung Tsze Yung superintendent of the revenue in Sze Chuen, colonel T'ung E Shan the com-

missioner of inspection, Gwei Wăn Kwang, and colonel Seu Seang, and bring them to the capital. When the prisoners had arrived, he appointed Leang Choo to investigate their crimes, as well as those of Kung Sëën Tsae, the president of the board of works. "They have been guilty as magistrates," said the Emperor, "of accepting bribes, and oppressing their inferiors. If I had not gone there myself their conduct would have led to insurrections."

The criminals seeing that all their actions had come to light, and that the Emperor had heard and seen them with his own ears and eyes, knew that it was of no use to attempt to excuse themselves, and after submitting for a time to the torture they made a true confession, when it came out that they were all creatures of the Eunuch Lew Kin. On this discovery his majesty was much enraged, and exclaimed, "The traitorous thieves, who never thought of serving the kingdom, but whose only object was to fatten themselves! Of what use are they?" With this he wanted to have

them put to death, in order to satisfy the resentment of the people. The high guardian, however, advanced to make intercession for them, and pleaded, that instead of being beheaded they might be degraded from their offices, and sent to Hĭh Lung Keang as convicts, in order to display the imperial mercy.

The Emperor acceded to his request, and at the same time caused measures to be taken to degrade all the partizans of the Eunuch that might be left in office. In consequence of this the government became distinguished for purity; and Leang Choo, remembering that it was incumbent upon his high office to secure the advance of men of worth and talents, and that as his own age was so far advanced that his life could only be compared to a flickering flame, he ought to bring forward men who could succeed him in the service of the court, presented a memorial one day requesting that his majesty would summon from Kéăng Nan the governor Yung She Hăng, the general Chang Chang Chun, the major Yen K'hwan, the lieutenant

Chaou Lĭn, the prefect of Yang Chow Lo Tsheaou Fei, and the prefect of Choo Chow She Kwŏ Lan. His majesty issued the necessary orders; and when all the above officers had repaired to the capital, Leang Chow led them to an audience of the Emperor, when they were severally rewarded and promoted.

From this time a host of loyal men were engaged in the imperial service, and his majesty dwelt amid profound repose.

> "Vengeance came sure; the crafty all met death,
> And happy peace the empire visited."

CHAP. XLV.

"Life is a game of chess; the world the board:
The players men, to whom 'tis freely given,
At will to move, and when the game is done,
The gainer, and the loser, stand confessed.

We must now follow up the fortunes of Chow Yuen, after having disposed of all the other personages of our history. As he directed his march with the soldiers to Hang Chow, the magistrates of the various places along his way came out to meet him, and the lads and lasses of the villages strove together to get a sight of him, talking of his filial piety which had moved the heart of Heaven, and transformed him from a wood-cutter into a person of such distinction and honour. The news of his approach was in this way transmitted from place to place, till at last it reached Hang Chow long before his own arrival. Nothing could exceed the joy of his mother and

the young lady Yŭh Ying, as well as of his uncle and aunt. They flitted out and in at the door, continually looking out for his appearance, till at last they could neither eat nor sleep soundly with anxiety.

At length, after they had waited for several days, Yuen reached Hang Chow, and was met without the city by all the officers civil and military, but not allowing himself to be detained by them, he stationed the five hundred soldiers outside the walls, and proceeded with his personal attendants to Ching Chaou's. After the mother and her son, and the uncle and his nephew, had given expression to their joy at meeting each other again, Yuen's notice was attracted by a young lady of about eighteen, who was standing by his mother's side, and holding up her sleeve, so as half to conceal her beauty. Fancying that he saw in her a resemblance to the daughter of Tsaou Këĕ, his imagination became excited, and he inquired at his mother who she was. On this the old lady informed him of Yŭh Ying's throwing herself into the river, and the other

particulars of her history, and introduced them to each other. Yuen's gratitude and feelings were kindled to the highest pitch by her attachment to him, and he continued there for several days.

At the end of that time, however, he proposed to return with his mother and his bride to pay their respects to Tsaou Kèĕ and his wife, and to satisfy his own resentment by the death of Tăng Sze Seang. Yŭh Ying was still quite ignorant of what had happened in her family, and therefore constrained herself to accede to the proposal, trusting that as things developed themselves she would be able to set Yuen right about the real cause of Tseu Kèŭh's message to him. Next day, accordingly, Yuen took leave of his uncle, giving him a thousand taels of silver in return for his kindness; and Chaou, seeing that it was vain to try to detain him longer, spread out a parting feast to speed them on their way.

They took their leave, therefore, and commenced their return home, attended by the five hundred soldiers, and escorted

out of the city by all the officers; and in a short time the news of their approach was conveyed to Sung Kėang fŏo, when all the officers, as those of other cities had done, went forth to meet the Emperor's adopted son.

This proceeding was in a little reported to Tseu Kėŭh, who was living with Yŭh Ying's mother in the monastery of Tsze Yun. The damsel's joy was unbounded, and she instantly proceeded to acquaint her mistress with the fact. The old lady, however, was not similarly affected. "What is it to me," said she, "in the midst of my sorrow, that the child of another person is returning with honour to his native place?"

Tseu Kėŭh could restrain herself no longer, but forthwith related to her one by one the various passages in her daughter's history, of which she had been kept in ignorance. "My young lady," she said in conclusion, "is now safe concealed in her aunt's monastery; but, since Chow Yuen has come here, I will inform him where she is. Without doubt he will go

there for her, and then bring her to you."

When the old lady had heard the damsel's account, alarm was mingled with her joy. "If you really know of my daughter," said she hurriedly, "it is well perhaps you should tell me what you have done; but if it be not so, and you are merely deceiving me into a temporary joy, what good will that do you? But since you knew where my daughter was, why did you not tell me before, instead of allowing me to remain with a sharp sword, as it were, piercing my heart, and watering my face with my tears day and night?"

"Before," replied Kèŭh, "I did not know what would be the success of our scheme, and I was afraid that by making it known I might bring calamity upon you. It was on this account that I was silent."

The damsel's explanation satisfied her mistress, and they spent a considerable time together talking over all the events. Their sorrow was now dispelled, and they waited anxiously for the arrival of Chow Yuen, which took place in the course of a

few days. As was usual, the officers all proceeded out to welcome him, and bring him into the city. Arrived within the walls, the young man ordered them to proceed towards the house of Tsaou Kèĕ, when several of the magistrates came forward, and informed him that it had been consumed by fire.

Yŭh Ying was close by in her chair, and the news awakened in her the liveliest sorrow. Instantly lifting up the screen, she inquired for her parents, and was told that her father had been consumed in the flames, but that her mother, with one old servant and a damsel, had escaped, and were now mourning for the dead in Tsze Yun monastery. As soon as she heard this disastrous intelligence, the young lady burst into a fit of weeping. Yuen's mother attempted for a time to comfort her, and then told her son to proceed to the monastery.

In obedience to her instructions Yuen directed his course thither, and no sooner had they arrived, than Tseu Kèŭh and the nuns came out to receive them, and

led them into the hall. When Yŭh Ying saw her mother she ran forward, and, kneeling down on both her knees, clasped her fast, weeping loudly. When she was a little composed she turned towards the place erected for the spirit of her father, and the sight of it again renewed her grief. The nuns, with Yuen's mother, came forward, and attempted to console her, but in vain; she still remained dissolved in tears.

In the mean time Chow Yuen had advanced, and paid his respects to his future mother-in-law. The old lady then inquired how her daughter and he had met together; when Ying, in a very sorrowful manner, related the events of her flight from home. In the course of her narration she mentioned Tăng Tsze Seang; on hearing whose name Yuen flew into a rage, and instantly commanded some of his people to go and bring him prisoner. Yŭh Ying heard the order, and reflecting that there was now no danger in making known the truth, since her father and uncle were dead, she acquainted Yuen with the parti-

culars of Tseu Kėŭh's plan to save him and his mother. The young man's anger disappeared as soon as he was undeceived about Tsze Seang's guilt, and he approached the damsel and thanked her for her kindness to him, and then dismissed the subject from his mind.

After this, Yŭh Ying made a great sacrifice to her father's soul; and Yuen seeing that the father and uncle of his bride were dead, and that they had there no house to reside in, proceeded to worship at the tombs of his ancestors, and then chose a day to commence his return to the capital. When the day arrived, he took with him his mother, Yŭh Ying, her mother, Tseu Kėŭh, and the old servant who had escaped the flames, and bent his course, to give an account of the success of his mission.

In the course of about a month they arrived at their journey's end, and Yuen entered the palace, to give his majesty an account of all that had transpired. When he concluded, he requested that Tseu Kėŭh might be given him for his concubine, which his majesty granted. Orders

were also issued to the board of works to build a house for Yuen within the precincts of the palace; and when it was finished, the Emperor himself presided over the celebration of the nuptials, having first raised Kĕŭh to the second rank of ladies, under the title of the heroic and the ardent. Afterwards each of the ladies brought Yuen several sons, all of whom approved themselves pillars of the empire. And here we may close the history of their fortunes.

The families of Chae and Loo, which were visited respectively by the Emperor, and the prime minister of state, were thereby marked out as enjoying a happy fate, and several of their descendants earned for themselves a place in history by their merits in the service of the empire. Liu Sze Hwa, the son-in-law of Loo Hung Chaou, was also a star descended to the world, whose advancement to the highest dignities was sure. It was on this account that the young lady, his bride, obtained the assistance of the Emperor in her hour of need. Afterwards Sze Hwa gained the rank of

Tsin Sze, and obtained an office in the court.

The above were all guests of the Gemmeous Hall, and riders of the Golden Horse, exhibiting the unchangeable principles of Heaven, and the difficulty of darkening the human heart, and that happiness and virtue, misery and wickedness, are inseparably connected in the way of recompense.

When Wang, the wife of Kin Tŏ Gaou, heard that her husband had undergone the penalty of the laws, she looked upon herself as an intruder in the world, and soon after strangled herself. Chow Yung and Ho Chin Pang, being acquainted with the bitterness of her lot, reported the event and her former history to the Emperor. His majesty was filled with admiration and sorrow, and caused her to be interred with the ceremonies due to a lady, and also raised a monument to her at the public expense in memory of her ardent virtues.

The example of Ching Tĭh, as recorded in these volumes, is instructive. Immediately after his accession to the throne

he became the prey of Lew Kin, was deceived by his counsels, and all his proceedings were perverse and improper; but afterwards, when he obtained the righteous assistance of Leang Choo and other loyal and worthy officers, and exerted himself to reward the faithful and punish the crafty, then all that he did was right and pleasant, insomuch that above he gave satisfaction to the heart of Heaven, and beneath realized all the wishes of his people. His character at first was as different from what it afterwards became as darkness from light. Now here we have an important principle displayed, viz. that the employment of the worthy leads to happiness and success, and the employment of the crafty, to misery and ruin. Our history, therefore, may serve as a luminous mirror to future ages. Observing where former carriages have been overturned, let them be careful and take heed.

But in writing this work I have not had in view merely the masters of kingdoms, but also the heads of families, and indeed all men, for there are few who act incau-

tiously in bestowing their trust and confidence that escape ruin. So thinking that the various incidents might be of use to admonish the world, I have composed them into a book, which, being disseminated throughout the empire, might serve to teach men to be cautious in employing others, and studious to regulate their own hearts. Nor has it been out of my thoughts to write something which might make the evening pass comfortably around the lamp, and while away the tedium of a house-confining day, or might increase the happiness of the hour devoted to poetry and wine, beneath the light of the moon, and amid the perfume of flowers.

THE END.

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